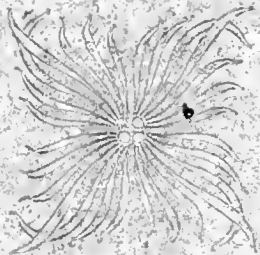


*The*  
**HISTORICAL**  
**MEMOIRE**

*Published Under the Auspices  
of the LeRoy Historical So-  
ciety, with Interesting Articles  
from Eighteen Authors in 1888*



1904

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NOVEMBER



1904



LE ROY, ILLINOIS  
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## PREFACE. ✂

EARLY in December 1903, the officers of the McLean County Historical Society held a meeting in LeRoy for the purpose of taking measures to celebrate the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the settlement of Buckles Grove. The time for said celebration had already past for more than a year, but it was determined to celebrate anyway, just as was done at The World's Fair in Chicago, a year after date, and is now being done at St. Louis World's Fair, in celebrating the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase, a year after date. At the above mentioned meeting an organization was effected under the name of The LeRoy Historical Society. T. L. Buck, was elected president, and James Coon, secretary. Meetings were held twice a month during the winter. Writers were appointed on eighteen different subjects, all of whom completed the work assigned them. The meeting was held in the Methodist church in LeRoy on the 22d of April, 1904. George P. Davis, president of the McLean County Historical Society, presided, and E. M. Prince, secretary of said Society, assisted in the exercises. Meetings were held in the afternoon and evening, and were largely attended and much interest manifested.

The officers of the County Society gave their consent for the local Society to publish the papers read at the meeting in pamphlet form. A committee, composed of T. L. Buck John McConnell and S. H. West, was appointed. They contracted with Mr. Clevenger, of the LeRoy Eagle, to do the work in magazine form, and in good style and finish.

The Old Settlers are all gone. Many interesting facts and incidents have passed from remembrance with their departure. But imperfect as our work may be, we feel that the facts narrated in the papers and read at our celebration will become of more interest to those who come after us as the years go by.

T. L. BUCK  
JOHN MCCONNELL  
S. H. WEST  
Committee

# PROGRAMME

## AFTERNOON

Selections From Old-time Music..... Miss Bessie Smith  
 Early Pioneers.....Simeon H. West  
 Early Newspapers.....John S. Harper  
 Good Old Times.....George M. Hedrick  
 Pioneer Farming.....John McConnell  
 Pioneer Fencing.....Thomas L. Buck  
 Vocal Duett,..... Mrs. J. Avey and Mrs. S. D. VanDeventer  
 Pioneer Schools.....Mrs. A. Murray  
 Fraternities.....E. D. Riddle  
 Churches.....Mrs. D. Young  
 War Records.....J. R. Covey

## EVENING

Music.....Orchestra  
     A. L. Coffey, Wm. Stoddart, Lee King, Chas. Williams  
     Chas. Schuler and Miss Oral Buck.  
 Tiling..... Joseph Keenan  
 Pioneer Cooking.....Mrs. George M. Hedrick  
 Geology.....Rev. W. E. Leavitt  
 Vocal Solo, "Robin Adair".....Nellie Cope  
 Early Books.....Mrs. Jno. McConnell  
 Music, "Old Folks' Reverie".....Orchestra  
 Transportation.....Mrs. J. V. Smith  
 Round, "Three Blind Mice".....Mrs. Avey, Mrs. VanDeventer  
     Miss Oral Buck, W. E. Lucas and L. P. Baum.  
 Old Time Music.....N. G. Humphrey and A. B. Conkling  
 Song, "How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours".....Audience  
 Fife Solo.....Leonard Chase  
 Spelling Schools.....Mrs. L. A. Rike  
 Song, "Rain on the Roof".....Quartette  
 Early Inventions.....Charles Williams  
 Music.....Orchestra

J. S. COON

MRS. J. GRIZZELL

MISS ORAL BUCK

Programme Committee

Some of the above selections were read by Mrs. L. B. Young,  
 Grace Cox, Ruth Simpson and Mrs. Rhodes, of Bloomington.



# The Pioneers of Empire Township

By S. H. West

THE TERRITORY embraced in Empire Township is eight miles long and six miles wide.

The middle fork of Salt creek enters the township on the north line in Section 2 and passes in a southwest course the entire length of the township. The west fork of Salt creek enters the township from the west in Section 30 and flows in a southeast course

to the junction with the middle fork in Section 33. These streams form about eleven miles of running water the year around in the township. About nine miles of this distance was bordered by a very fine grove of heavy timber, consisting of the different varieties of oak, walnut, hickory and other valuable timber. The area of this grove was about seven thousand acres. In addition to this there was about two thousand acres of fine timber along the south side of Old Town timber, included in Empire Township. The remainder of the

township consisted of some twenty-two thousand acres of beautiful, rich, undulating prairie. Thus we find a combination of the richest gifts of nature, abundance of water and timber and beautiful rich prairie, a combination that cannot be excelled by any spot on earth.

This was an ideal location for the home of the farmer and stockman. For unknown centuries this beautiful land had been occupied by the birds of the air, the beasts of the wilderness and the paths of roving bands of Indians, some of whom had a camping place in Section 11, in the edge of Old Town timber.

This was the condition here when in 1827 John Buckles, a native of Virginia, in quest of a new home, located in what has since that time been known as Buckles' Grove. It derived its name from him as the first settler. By all the rules of propriety, the name of Buckles ought to have been given to the township. It ought to be given to it

yet. Mr. Buckles was the largest and strongest man that ever lived in the township. He built a rude cabin and made his living by hunting and farming. He lived but a few years, and I have been unable to learn anything particular in regard to his characteristics.

Aquilla Conoway and his son, Harvey, settled here in 1828. Nathan T. Brittin and Thomas O. Rutledge came in 1829. There settled here in 1830 Henry Crumbaugh and his son, J. H. L., Daniels Crumbaugh and sons, William, John and Leonard A. They were from Kentucky.

Michael Dickerson and sons, Robert F., Henry C. and Caleb P., and Daniel Jackson, James Rutledge, Silas Watters and sons, John and Chalton, James Merrifield and son, Otho, Levi Westfall, Jas. Van Deventer, James and Jerry Walden all settled in various parts of the township in the early thirties. James Bishop of Ohio first came here in 1831, but did not settle until several years later. Renben Clearwater, Amos Conoway, James Conoway and Joshua Hale all settled here at an early date. Aaron Williams came in 1831, Andrew Deffenbaugh, Abram Buckles and his brothers, Peter, Thomas and William came in 1832. T. J. Barnett



Simeon H. West

also came in 1832. Moses Dunlap and son, John, located here in 1834. P. C. Eskew came to the country in 1834 but did not locate in the township until 1846. James Kimler, Sidney D. Baker and E. E. Greenman came to the county at a very early date but did not locate here until the early forties. Mahlon Bishop came here in 1835. James Wiley and his brother, Thomas, located here in the same year. In the same year came John W. Braddeley and his son, John C. They were from England. Isaac Murphy and James Lucas settled here at or before this date. T. D. Gilmore of Kentucky, Elijah Hedrick, Elisha Gibbs and son, Simeon, all located here in 1836. Stephen Conkling came here about the same time. Hiram Buck and son, Thomas, James Lincoln, Robert and John Barr and Thomas M. Whitaker all came in 1837. The town of LeRoy was laid out by Gridley and Coyel of Bloomington in 1836. Minor Bishop, Levi and Daniel Knott, John and Jessie Karr located here about 1840. Thomas Martin, Henry Rice and Hamilton Gilbert were here at an early date. Montgomery Crumbaugh located here in 1841. There were probably other early settlers whose names have not reached me. Imperfect as the above list may be it includes the main bulk of that band of hardy and resolute pioneers who left their old homes in Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York, New England, Ohio, Kentucky, England and Ireland and located here during the first fourteen years of the settlement of the township, and who in the face of all manner of hardships, privations, inconveniences and sickness laid the foundation for the grand and superb conditions existing today. Money was so scarce for many years that no one could hope to obtain much of it, and fame was an unknown desire among them. Many of them came to make for themselves new homes in a new country. Others came for the love of hunting and the luxury of living on the frontier—the same spirit that animated Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton and Kit Carson in their adventurous lives. This spirit was well expressed by Isaac Murphy, a typical pioneer of this township, when he told the writer hereof that he never saw a covered wagon going west without wanting to go there too. At that time Mr. Murphy owned one of the finest locations, of 1000 acres, in the county. The early settlers of Empire Township experienced all the hardships that were met by all of the pioneers of other parts of the country. They lived in log cabins daubed with mud, with chimneys built with sticks and mud, puncheon floors and clapboard roofs held in place by weight poles. Doors made of split stuff pinned together with wooden pegs and hung on wooden hinges. The furniture, in most cases, was such as they could make themselves. Their clothing was made

at home, of material raised or prepared by themselves. Their leather was tanned from skins of animals in wooden troughs dug out of logs. The food of the first settlers consisted of wild meats and corn meal crushed in a mortar. In some cases the corn had been frost-bitten. They had a full experience in the winter of the deep snow in 1830 and '31 and in the sudden freeze of 1836, but these things have been told so often I will not repeat them here. Tradition says that the first mill constructed in the township consisted of two boulders dressed down to the shape of mill stones, and the capacity of the mill was five bushels of corn per day. The price of corn in early times was five cents per bushel and no market at that. It was nearly as difficult to pay for land at \$1 25 per acre as it is now at \$100 per acre. While Empire Township was one of the finest locations for the stock business in the county it seems there were few extensive dealers in that line among the early settlers, at least not on the scale that prevailed in some other settlements. James B'shop was the largest cattle feeder and dealer in this vicinity and became the wealthiest citizen, owning 3,000 acres of land at his death. Many of the old timers acquired good homes. A few became wealthy. Some moved west and others lived in moderate circumstances. It is believed that all the old set except Sidney D Baker, who now lives in Council Grove, Kansas, have gone to the other shore.

When the people here first had cattle and hogs to sell the principal market was Galena, which was much more important at that time than Chicago. Galena was the center of the lead mining business—hence consumed much beef and pork. When the grain trade of Chicago began the settlers here raised wheat, cut it with cradles, bound it by hand, threshed it with flails, or trampled it out with horses on a smooth spot of hard ground, then threw the wheat and chaff up in the air till the chaff was blown away, then loaded the wheat on ox wagons and hauled it to Chicago, taking a scythe along to cut slough grass with which to bridge soft places on the way. The driver camped out, and the oxen fed on free grass, so there were no expenses. It took about two weeks to make the trip.

The wheat would sell for about 37 to 40 cents per bushel. The return load would consist of salt and groceries. Sometimes lumber was hauled back. Previous to this period iron utensils were very scarce. Plows had to be taken a long distance to be repaired. Iron wedges used in making rails were so scarce that when there was one in a neighborhood there would sometimes be quite a contention as to who should have the first chance to borrow it. With so little money in the country it is not strange that the collection of debts was slow business. It is said that John Buckles, though an

easy going man, became so exasperated at one time at a delinquent customer that he gave the fellow a sound thrashing and then told him that his account was settled in full. This mode of settlement had a very healthy effect in the neighborhood. I regret very much that I cannot learn more about the life and traits of John Buckles. The characteristics of those pioneers are of special interest to me.

The educational, religious and old style farming and other departments having been assigned to other writers I will not engage in those subjects to any extent, but dwell more on the peculiar personal traits of some of the old pioneers. The Buckles brothers were honest, easy going people, strictly religious, good neighbors, and good citizens. Silas Watters was a standard man, a devout Methodist, an upright, influential man. Reuben Clearwater was a very plain and devout man. The Bishops were ardent Methodists and upright men. Similar things can be said of most of the old pioneers. James Lincoln was one of the first, if not the first school teacher in the township. He was from Pennsylvania, well educated and the best read man in the settlement. Later on he practiced law in LeRoy. He was an eloquent and forcible orator. Had he possessed more energy he would have made his mark high up among his fellow men. R. F. Dickerson was another lawyer of very bright mind. Perhaps no man has made a stronger impress in the township than Hiram Buck. He took the world easy until fifty years old, when he left LeRoy, went out on a farm, began to branch out in farming and cattle feeding, becoming a large land owner and becoming more energetic up to the time of his death at a very old age. He filled many offices of honor and died respected by all. James Wiley was a standard man who was highly honored. James Bishop has already been noted. Mahlon Bishop was elected and served one term in the legislature with credit. Minor Bishop was held in very high esteem. The Conoways and Rutledges were highly respected. T. J. Barnett and the Braddeleys were prominent business men of high standing. Daniel Crumbaugh was a soldier of the war of 1812. He served under Col. R. M. Johnson in the battle of Thames, in which the great war chief, Tuecumseh, was killed by Col. Johnson, who was afterwards vice president of the United States. Mr. Crumbaugh and his brother, Henry, were men of stirring honor and integrity, and left a goodly heritage to their children.

It would be a great pleasure to go on and tell of the good qualities of all the old pioneers, but lack of space forbids. Suffice it to say that taken all in all they were a goodly hand of hardy men and women who have left an impress on this community that time will never efface.

But I have made one omission that must be filled out. There was one settlement in Empire Township that has never been mentioned in any history. In Sections 1 and 2 along the south side of Old Town timber was a settlement that was for many years known as "Hell's Neck." Never before has any historian had the nerve to write this ugly repellant name. It derived its name from the fact that there were no church members there. The people were children of nature and lived close to mother nature. They could not discover by any visible signs, that nature had set apart one day as better than another, consequently they spent their Sundays as best suited their convenience. If they had a little work that needed doing they did it, or the boys wanted a horse race they had it. But the preachers occasionally found their way there and always received a cordial welcome. The meetings were held in the Brittin school house, which was a log cabin of the primitive style. The people all turned out to those meetings, and droves of dogs followed, and sometimes engaged in lively fights around and even in the house during service. It is related that one of the most prominent men of the Neck used to work on Sunday until he saw the preacher coming, when he would go to church, take the preacher home to dinner and as soon as the preacher would leave he would go to work again.

Isaac Murphy, and Nathan T. Brittin were the most prominent citizens in the settlement. They were the bankers or money loaners, not only of "Hell's Neck" but all the surrounding country. Their rates were not the same. Mr. Murphy charged fifteen per cent interest and Mr. Brittin would charge twelve per cent. Mr. Brittin would trust any one, and would take a note for twenty-five cents as well as for \$1000. He never tried to collect the principal, but always made diligent efforts to collect what he called "that little dab of interest." And he would take anything in payment of interest—a load of corn, a calf, colt or old wagon, then sell the same to someone and take their note, and if he was scarce of paper would sometimes write the note on the back of some other note. Mr. Brittin was a good, kind hearted man, and was truly the poor man's friend. He was a soldier in the Black Hawk war.

Isaac Murphy was also a soldier in the Black Hawk war, and would sometimes tell of helping to chase Black Hawk all over the northern country, but admitted in the most important chase, he, Black Hawk was in the rear and the whites were making record time in trying to get away. Mr. Murphy was a man of striking appearance, tall, well formed, fine features and eyes piercing as an eagle, and of quick nervous, emphatic action and speech. He was restless as a caged lion, and never

satisfied. He was very rough outwardly, but had a tender heart. After the completion of the overland railroad he sold his valuable possessions here at a very low price and moved by rail to San Francisco, and thence by sea to Oregon. While going up the Columbia river the captain of the ship told Mr. Murphy he was too old to go to a new country. He at once answered that he could start a grave yard if nothing else, and speedily fulfilled the prophecy, as he died in a few months after his arrival.

In the early fifties I was well acquainted with every man, woman and child in "Hell's Neck" and am free to say that I never knew a more honest or kindhearted set of people. The name of the settlement long since passed out of use.

No absolutely correct history has ever been or can be written. These sketches are imperfect, but I trust they may assist in perpetuating the memory of some of the incidents and conditions connected with the early settlement of this highly

favored country. Before closing it is well to say that life among the pioneers was not all hardships and privations, but on the contrary they had their sports and social enjoyments, and some of them have told me that the people enjoyed themselves better than they do at the present time. To a great extent we take our happiness or misery with us wherever we go. Many of the pioneers were happier in their log cabins than some of the millionaires of today.

And now a kindly farewell to the noble men and women who first settled this highly favored spot. They builded better than they knew. They opened the way and laid the foundation for a higher civilization, for the railroads, telegraph, telephone, electric light and all modern improvements and conveniences. They rest from their earthly labors. Blessed be the memory of their deeds, and thrice blessed their deeds of progressive goodness in the home of the blest through all the endless cycles of eternity.

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# Pioneer Farming in Empire Township

By John McConnell

THE SYSTEM of farming employed here was about the same as that prevailing throughout the country. As fully sixty percent of the early settlers took up this pursuit, we deem it paramount to all other occupations. Everything then depended on the products of the soil. Doctors, school teachers, preachers, carpenters, blacksmiths and others lived in the country and made a great deal of their living by cultivating some ground. Towns and villages then were hardly thought of. The pioneer was self-reliant and became an all around business man and made the best of the situation of whatever nature.

The early settlers did not generally buy large tracts of land; they merely staked out their claims and got out a pre-emption with the intention of making their entry when better able; they generally preferred a piece of timber to begin with; they usually sought the east side of the groves, in order to have better protection. There was nothing to stimulate the purchase of large tracts of land; there was very little demand for surplus products, and fencing was expensive, having to be very strong; the Virginia rail worm fence was mostly used and cost more than the land enclosed. There were thousands of acres of cheap land to be had, but breaking also involved heavy expense. A legal fence, it was claimed, should be horse high, bull strong and hog tight. There was more contention about bad fences than all else; stock ran at large and some of it became very unruly.

One of the great disadvantages that the pioneer had to contend with was a suitable plow; the old wooden mold board barshear was poorly adapted to the work required; it required an immense power to draw it and had to be built heavy and strong in order to stand the heavy strain; the beam was some ten or eleven feet long and the cut was from twenty to twenty-four inches wide, and

some four inches deep, in order to keep it in the ground; about three inches would have been a better depth. It required four or five yoke of cattle to pull it through the tough, thick blue stem and sward; in many places a large tough root—called shoe string—which was very hard to cut, also a red root that would throw the plow out, were found; two acres was a good day's work and

\$3 per acre was about the price; some times two crops were given for having the land broke. The best time to break this sward sod was May and June; if sooner it grew back, and if later, it did not rot so well. Corn was dropped alone along the cut edge of the furrow, often by boys and girls; a slower but surer way was to chop a hole in the sod, drop in the corn and tramp with foot; this crop was called sod corn and left to take care of itself, no attempt was made to cultivate it. Sometimes pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, etc., did well on sod; beans were sometimes planted. When this sod corn was cut and shocked and the later breaking sown to wheat with no further preparation than harrowing

well with a wooden toothed harrow, everything being favorable, good crops were often raised. Prairie sod was easily killed, and rotted very readily if broken at the proper time; weeds had not made their appearance here yet, except a very few; a weed called tumbled-weed and may be a few others soon came on.

Wheat was cut with a sickle or cradle; the sickle was first used and the cradle came afterwards; one advantage the sickle had was that it worked well in down or lodged grain, it needed no sharpening, and to use it was not very hard work, and with it neat work was done. Ruth and Moabitess, who gleaned in the fields of Boaz, would have made poor wages in gleaning after our pioneer reapers; the cradle was the speediest way, but it took more



John McConnell

muscle; one acre per day was good work with the sickle and three with the cradle. Threshing was done with the flail or tramping with horses; sometimes the tenth bushel was given for flailing out. The granery was a rail pen chinked with straw and covered with prairie grass; cleaning was done with sheet and wind by hand; some became very expert in this way. It required two hands and it was a very slow process at best.

The wild or natural prairie grass was the only kind used for hay; the blue stem was considered the best and could be cut any time after September 1 until killed with frost; it was cut with the scythe and winrowed with fork and hand rake; the fork was often a croched stick, the rake hand-made, all wood; large quantities were saved, which was clean, good and healthy for stock and kept well in the stack. Great care had to be taken to keep the prairie fires from getting the grass and also the hay; these fires were very fierce and destructive, burning large quantities of hay and grain and many hard fights had to be made to keep them under control, which was sometimes impossible if the wind should be strong. Slough grass made very good roofing for sheds, stables, etc.; if plenty was used and properly put on, it did well to shed snow and rain, and there was a warmth about it that made it comfortable for stock; this grass was of great use to the early settler and it would have been hard to have done without it.

The ground that was planted to corn after the sod had rotted was often furrowed out both ways and furrows about four feet apart made; this work was done also with a two-horse bar-shear wooden mold board, which had to be cleaned off every few rods and which made hard, slow work; the corn was dropped by hand and covered with the hoe; no harrowing was done at this time, but after the corn had grown to a height of four or six inches an A shaped harrow was run astride each row, after removing the middle front and rear teeth, a grape vine bow for a handle; the corn was plowed with one horse, first cultivating with a fluke, an iron tooth something like a goose foot; the frame a croch of tree about three feet long, one tooth placed in front and one on each rear end and side; this was used in first cultivation, a small bar shear was also used; the after plowing was done with a large shovel forged out by blacksmiths and stocked by farmers. Three furrows were often run between each row and it was well tasselled out before the cultivation was finished and a very short singletree had to be used. The early settler seemed very indifferent as to gathering in the crop; the most enterprising would take a favorable time and jerk off a nice lot, haul and winrow at a convenient place, then call on all the lads and lassies around about; this meant a husking frolic,

a sort of a valentine arrangement. Each lad was expected to have an assistant and was given the right to chose his own helper; all things being ready, the work went cheerfully and briskly on; if a red ear showed up it had to be disposed of in rather a sentimental way; this sort of corn had a double value, the greatest was that for which it stood, which did not in any way impair its commercial value, and red stimulates courage. A well regulated husking in those times was considered a great luxury and never should have become obsolete.

Sometimes the ground was prepared for corn by ridging up or turning two furrows together, etc., until the patch was finished, these ridges were made the proper distance apart so each one represented a row when furrowed across; corn was dropped to the center of the ridge; this was a speedy process and did well on new land. Potatoes, beans, turnips and all kinds of vegetables grew to perfection, as did all species of vegetation take kindly to this black soil; cultivation was easy as weeds were few; the great trouble was tools to work with, but as everything grew almost spontaneously, the cultivation was an easy job and an abundance was produced and when properly stored away it was greatly relished during the winter; burying in the ground was the usual way of keeping them; many vegetables keep better and retain their flavor better thus than in any other way. Foodstuff was abundant and good, blackberries, gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries and dewberries grew wild, also grapes, both fall and winter, were plentiful. Crabapples, plums, red and black haws, etc., which were good for jellies, butters, preserves, etc. Plums could be dried, crabapples burred. Nuts also were abundant; walnuts, hickory, white oak, burr oak, chick-o-pin, etc., all of which were valuable to the pioneers. Insects were not seen here at that time, hence all of these grew to perfection; wild honey was plentiful, and locusts occasionally, wild game and fowls were abundant, such as deer, possum, squirrel, mink, muskrat, quail, grouse, geese, brant, bucks, crane, snipe, turkey, wild pigeon, etc. Fish of many kinds were to be had; these luxuries were accessible to the pioneer and added greatly to the comfort and pleasure of the settler. Tame fowls, chickens, guinea fowls, etc., were raised.

I will give a brief description of a prairie team, without which it would have been next to impossible to have settled and improved the country: A prairie team was made up of the bovine genius, both male and female, when of suitable age were pressed into the service; five yoke were about the required number to do satisfactory work; the grass roots were tough, firm and hard to cut. It re-



quired an immense power to keep steadily going and to do satisfactory work. In making up the team it was necessary to have two well broke yokes, one for the beam and one for the leaders; these need not necessarily be heavy, but should be brisk and handy; the middle might be raw or unbroken of either sex, good heavy cows did well. The beam cattle were depended on to keep in the furrow, hold the plow level and hold the team, should they attempt to stampede, which they sometimes did. The most difficult part of the work was to lay the lands off true and straight, if short crooks were made in laying off, the long strung out team soon worked them out; after the furrows were well opened up the team very readily followed them. The whip or tanning machine, as it was sometimes called, was indispensable, as very much depended on its proper use; it required a platted buckskin lash some ten or twelve feet long and the stock about the same; an ironwood pole about one and a fourth inches in diameter at the butt was about the right size; the proper position for the driver was along the beam cattle and keeping the remainder of the team before him. However wild or awkward the team might be, it soon become gentle and tractable; the team was not fed grain after the grass had well started; they were allowed some extra time to graze morning and evening and were given a little extra time at noon, consequently there was no expense in feeding. The gearing was very inexpensive and durable—\$2.50 for yokes and \$2 for chain. It did not require longer than five minutes to yoke a gentle pair of oxen; each ox had to have a name, and like babies, they were hard to decide on; a near ox generally had one syllable and the off ox a two syllable name; for example, I will give the names that learned ourself to break prairie, viz: Leaders, Buck and Barry; next, Rock and Paddy; next, Ball and Dergan; next, Sam and Brandy; beam, Jack and Barney.

Hunting and fishing were popular pastimes; it was pursued for pleasure and profit; the fellow who could put up the biggest hunting or fishing story was the hero of the times; everything went joyfully along with the hunter until deer hounds were brought in, which soon drove the largest and best game out of the country; this was one of the mistakes of the pioneer. The bird dogs of the present are doing the same with the quail and other valuable birds, which is a great damage to agriculture; farmers should join hands in eliminating the dog nuisance; it might be well to include pugs and poodles; their is a trite truism that those who lie down with dogs get up with fleas. Exit dogs.

Sheep were raised for wool and mutton; they were of the coarse wool breeds; the sheep were

washed in the creeks before being shorn and after being shorn the wool was picked by hand; wool pickings were common; the women and girls did this kind of work, they also carded and spun it into yarn, and whilst at it, spun many yarns that contained no wool; the woolen yarn was woven into jeans, flannel, blankets, etc.

Flax was raised, pulled, broke, scouched, spun and woven into linen for shirts, pants, sheets and other uses; the tow from the flax was used for making coarse goods, sacks, strings and quite a good deal for cleaning and swabbing guns.

Wolves were a great annoyance by prowling around in the night, killing sheep, poultry, pigs, and lambs, and their dismal howlings were not soothing to slumber on, and much time was spent hunting, trapping and running them down with horses. Snakes were numerous and of many kinds: Bull, blueracers, garter, joint, glass, rattlers and hoop, but I think the latter was not seen. The rattlers were the most to be dreaded; they were short and thick. The largest about three to three and a-half feet long. Their habit was to coil up projecting the end of its tail up and out a little above the body, which it rattled when disturbed; they always made a rattle before they made a strike, which was a warning to stand back. I think they could not strike without being coiled and only a few inches above the ground. The remedy was plenty of whisky taken internally, and ambicr was applied externally; the bite seldom proved fatal if plenty of whisky was at hand and freely used. There was a peculiar case of a rattler's bite that went the rounds here in early times: Uncle Sam Wren was bitten and he suffered no inconvenience from the effect, he lived right along but the snake expired instantly. This was an extreme case in which preventative did the work. I will relate an incident wherein we had business with the largest bull snake I ever saw. It was some seven feet long or thereabouts. In the summer of '55 together with two other teams I was breaking wild sward in Randolph, near Mud creek; we were on one mile rounds and well strung out; one of the drivers ahead came across his snakeship, being near the stable where we kept our herd horse, he procured a pitchfork and speared him through the neck, pinning him to the ground near the last furrow, leaving him there wrangling, writhing and blowing. As my team came along a large cow in the middle of the team saw, or smelled, his snakeship and began to bellow and lunge; by doing so she excited and demoralized the other cattle and it took lively work to avert a stampede. It was questionable whether she would break her neck or the yoke. Several rounds were made before she settled down to business.

Iron bolts, wire and nails were hard to get and expensive, also leather and rope. The hickory withe was made to do service in their stead. This was made of a small hickory sprout, by trimming off all side limbs until made pliable to within a few inches of the butt and when cut off at the ground was ready for use and when heated it could be tied in almost any shape and when properly fastened it made a good substantial tie and would stand a heavy strain, and would do good service in many ways. Hickory and other barks were used for chair bottoms and baskets. It served instead of rings for ox yokes, it coupled single-trees and double trees satisfactorily, and filled a part very important in that time of scarcity of other material. Grape vines were used for clothes lines. In the Billy Clark smoke house in LeRoy there are meat hooks of hickory withes that have been there over forty years and in use yet.

All kinds of stock were turned out on the range to ruminate at will and much time was spent in looking after them to keep them from straying off. Money was scarce and like the Dutchman's rye, very seldom. Exchange was the custom; wheat, etc., were exchanged for cows, cows for oxen, oxen for horses, horses for store goods, and the merchant drove them to market. Some of the pioneers became expert in this kind of traffic. Stock buyers came around and bought and bunched up the surplus stock and drove them to market. Everything was guessed off. Sometimes hogs were weighed with steel-yard stock-scales—not in general use. The pioneer hog was a kind of evil genius, but an indispensable product, for all that. He was a long, lanky fellow with bristles on his rump and shoulders which he raised when angry or excited, had a long snout and tail, with powerful jaws and teeth which did good service. He had a way of flopping himself on his side and squeezing himself under or through a remarkably small space. When he could not get under he would attempt to get over. He was a rustler and a rooter and subsisted principally on nuts and roots and looked well to his own interests. A grandmother and a couple of generations were capable of tearing up more dirt than an ordi-

nary prairie team in a day. When well matured and finished he made a pile of the finest bacon and lard. All in all he was a typical animal for the times. The pioneer could not have used a hog that could not whip or out run a wolf. After rounding out his time in the field he was capable of transporting himself to market over Walker's Line, landing at Pekin, Peoria or Chicago. The pioneer generally persuaded him to make the journey and went along for company.

A large percent of the early settlers came here overland with large stout wagons of broad tread, stiff tongues and well ironed and covered, which made a good shelter and they were capable of holding a good deal of freight. They were drawn by two or four horses or oxen. These wagons afterwards did good service in hauling grain and goods to and from the few markets of those times. After making the long, hard journey it must have looked like a dismal prospect to carve out an ideal home when taking a view of the conditions of their surroundings. There were none or very few houses, no roads or bridges, few homes and less conveniences, but they had for encouragement an abundant supply of pure flowing, never failing water and an abundance of excellent timber of great variety which was exactly suited to their needs, but not enough to make it a burden to them. This was truly a wooden age and it supplied their almost every need, their buildings, and tools, even down to a broom, mush stick or shoe pegs were of wood—but there was not enough to be a burden. There was no logs or brush to burn, or clearing to be done; those grand groves were well flanked with thousands of acres of the finest prairie land that lay within the borders of this fair land, and covered with grass, the cheapest and best stock food on the green earth. These grand prairies lay here ready for cultivation, the only thing to be done was to turn over the sward and plant the seed, nature did the rest. There was much pleasure and profit connected with pioneer life, but along different lines than now. Taking all in all their condition was as favorable as that allotted to average humanity.

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# Pioneer Cooking in Empire Township

By Mrs. Geo. Hedrick



I WAS NEVER more surprised then when I first learned that my name was down for a history of cooking of the early settlers. Why, I had never written anything in my life of a public nature, and what was there to be said about it anyway? I have always heard they lived very plainly, and to describe their manner of cooking I should first have to describe the kind of houses they lived in, etc., and to do that would be stepping over on the Pioneers' subject and maybe I would not get back to my cooking till every one would be hungry, so I was puzzled, but finally concluded to write what I know and what knowlege I could obtain from my husband, as he was here at a much earlier date than I was, and as few, if any, of the young people of the present day have any idea of the manner of cooking or habits of the early settlers of this country, it would be well to give a history of somethings I have learned about it for the benefit of the old and young who may be interested or wish to know. I will say in the first place that people who came here in early times settled around the timber

or near the edge of the timber, as this was a much colder country then than now, they thought they would all freeze to death out on the bleak prairie with nothing to protect them from the wintery blasts; so they cut down trees nearly a foot in diameter and built houses of them, cutting them all the same length, and after making a notch in each end of the log to hold them in place, they proceeded to lay them together pen fashion. When it was as high as they wished, it was ready for the roof, which was a continuation of logs only farther apart, the end of the logs being cut shorter every time and the side logs drawing closer together made the slant in the roof. It was then covered with boards four feet long, which were sawed the required length, of smooth oak timber split out

with a froe (an iron blade for the purpose); these were laid on for the roof and held in place by weight poles, no nails being used. Now the cabin, as it was called, was ready to be daubed and chinked. This was done by wedging in pieces of wood between the logs to fill up the largest places, then all the crevices were plastered with clay, mixed with straw. Altogether it was a very warm house. The floor was made of split logs smoothed off, with split side up. This was called a puncheon floor. The only window was a square hole or aperture made by sawing out about a foot and a half of one log on the side of the house and instead of glass they used greased paper to keep out the cold and let in the light. This was pasted smoothly over the window and answered a very good purpose. The only door was made by splitting out slabs two or three inches thick and held in place by laying two or three slabs cross-ways and pinning them together with wooden pins. The door was then hung with wooden hinges; the only way of fastening the door was a latch made of a piece of wood about a foot



Mrs. Geo. Hedrick

long and two inches wide. This was fastened to the door and made to work up and down; when down it dropped into a notch fastened to the door casing and this held the door fast. A hole was bored a few inches above the latch and a leather string was tied around the latch by one end; the other end of the string was inserted through this hole and hung on the outside so that one from the outside could pull the string and raise the latch the same as we turn a knob now when we want to enter; and at night when they wanted to lock the door the string was drawn inside; next morning it was inserted in the hole again so that all comers could go in. Now we are ready for the chimney, which was made of sticks, clay and straw; straw mixed with clay to hold it together, then it was

plastered on the outside to protect it from the weather and on the inside to keep the stick from burning. Having first sawed out a piece five or six feet square at one end of the cabin, the chimney is joined up to this space which forms the fire place. The hearth was sometimes made of clay and sometimes made of flat stones, if such a thing could be found, and here is where the cooking of early times was done; for it must be remembered that cook stoves had never been heard of in those days. So a fire was built in the cabin chimney by placing a back log on first, then a smaller one on top of that, then a couple of stones were fitted up to these, and a fore-stick was laid on that, then filled in with kindling and small wood. Now comes lighting the fire. Matches then had never been heard of, so they had always on hand a bunch of tow or a piece of punk which was very easy to burn, and by holding this under a flint and striking the flint with a piece of steel the sparks would fly out and set the tow or punk afire, and that touched to the kindling would start the fire; and it was no uncommon thing to borrow fire of their neighbors, if they lived close enough, as every one tried to keep fire from one meal to the next by covering it up with ashes. I should have told you while building the chimney that a bar of iron was put across the throat of the chimney from side to side with hooks on and on which they hung their iron pots to cook their meats and vegetables, and sometimes they had what was called a crane. A piece of iron was hinged on one side of the fire place or jamb, with an iron attached with hooks on; this could be swung back and forth over the fire, and was a great convenience in those days, and a luxury all did not possess; and many a pot of dinner was upset and spilled for the want of them. They baked their corn bread in this way: A bed of coals was shoveled out on the hearth and an iron skillet with three legs was placed over them, then greased with a piece of fat meat; in this was placed three good sized corn dodgers (as they called them), two or three inches thick and covered the bottom of the skillet, this was made with the hands, of corn meal, salt and water; sometimes a little lard or cracklings were used; after the bread was in the skillet an iron lid, which had been heated over the fire, was put on, and red hot coals heaped on that, and in about an hour it was done; then a pair of hooks, which were always handy, were used to lift the lid off. Another way to bake corn bread was to spread the dough on a smooth board and set that up before a good fire, and when done on one side, turn over and bake on the other; still another way was to take the ear of corn out of the husk and fill the husk with dough and bake it in the ashes, first covering the husk with hot ashes then heaping red hot coals on that;

and sometimes they baked between cabbage leaves in the same way; this bread though very plain was sweet and wholesome. Sometimes meal was made by parching corn and beating it to the required fineness. Wheat was raised, but mills were few and far between and poorly equipped to make flour, so wheat bread was a luxury seldom indulged in.

One way to cook meat was to hang it on a wire before a good fire and roast it that way, having placed a pan underneath to catch the gravy that would drop down. It was one person's business to watch and turn the meat so it would cook on all sides, and also to dip the gravy over it, which was already seasoned with salt and pepper. I think a piece of venison cooked in this way would be greatly relished by people of today. Deer were plentiful and so was wild game of many kinds, such as turkeys, cranes, geese, ducks, brant, prairie chickens, rabbits, squirrels and all kinds of birds, as we have now, but the people did not have the ambition to hunt in those days as the people of the present day would if they had a chance. They had their fat meat and corn bread and that was about all they cared for, but some dried their venison and other meats suitable to dry. Wild fruit was plentiful, such as blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, plums and crabapples, but they were used, if used at all, without much sugar, as that also was a luxury few, if any, could afford, though some, later on, tapped trees and made a little sugar, as we sometimes do now.

Canning fruit then was unknown, and remained so till about 1860, so the only way to keep fruit for winter use was to dry it. They also dried pumpkin by cutting it in strips and hanging on a strong cord above the fireplace; they also had hominy in those days by soaking corn in hot water or lye a few minutes to loosen the skin, then put it in a mortar which was either burnt out or hewn out of the end of a log; it was then beaten with a pestle to get the skins off, and every now and then taken out to fan the skins out. Then it was boiled as we boil hominy now, or cooked in an oven which was like a skillet, only deeper and had ears on the sides and was handled with hooks. The hominy was put in with plenty of water, covered with an iron lid with fire on it and fire heaped around the oven; it would cook very nicely in three or four hours and was much better hominy than any we can buy at the present day.

Vegetables of all kinds grew to perfection and were often kept under the floor in winter near the hearth to keep them from freezing; but mostly buried in the ground outside; cellars were not used yet, but as time wore on, some had caves as we often see now. I remember once in the winter of 1853 my sister and I were invited to a quilt-

ing bee and corn husking. We were just from Kentucky and anxious to take in the sights, so we went. There was snow on the ground and the weather was very cold; the young folks from all around were there; the boys with their red-top boots on, and pants stuffed in them. The girls with their home-spun dresses, or if they had a light calico dress, they put that on; then a red bandanna handkerchief was pinned to the right side by one corner, the other just touching the floor. Now they were ready for the dance, which was to be at night. One girl came five miles on horseback with a thin white dress on and no riding skirt, a small thin shawl and a white sun-bonnet, and the wind blowing a perfect gale of snow and frost and it was bitter cold. As she came over the hill the wind determined to tear what few clothes she had on to shreds. How I did pity that girl, and it was no wonder that in a short time she died of consumption. One of the young men a little prouder than the rest brought a trunk with his Sunday clothes in it so as to dress for the dance, and some mischievous fellows hid the trunk under the house and then there was a time, but after a while the trunk was found and everybody was ready for supper and the dance; the quilt being out and the corn being husked. They had a great deal cooked of everything that was good to eat at both meals. They had three large turkeys roasted with dressing, vegetables of all kinds, and pies and cakes, and I don't remember all they had but it was a big lay out of good things, all cooked by a fireplace. In dancing the one that could make the most noise with his red-top boots was about all right. One girl fell to the floor and her partner jumped back, threw up his hands and said: "Why, you fell, didn't you?" but did not offer to help her up. At a late hour my brother came for us with a wagon half filled with straw and a comfort spread over that. We got in and another comfort was thrown over us and we started for home, a distance of nearly two miles, when a young man, who as the Widow Bedott says, was trying to be polite to me, rode up by the side of the wagon and asked if we did not want a pilot home. I said, no we could find the way; not wishing to trouble him, and not quite getting the idea that he wanted to go home with us to stay all night, so he gave his horse a cut and away he went. He had about eight miles to go and he got lost in the blinding storm that followed and almost froze to death, not arriving at home till daybreak. I was sorry to have caused him so much discomfort, but was glad when we got home that he had not gone with us as my father had taken in three travelers for the night and our beds were full. Another time my sister, Mrs. Crumbaugh, and I were invited to a wool picking. The Methodist preacher was there

and a number of the neighbors, and about the middle of the afternoon the young lady of the house went out, caught a chicken and dressed and stewed it and heaped it up on a plate in the middle of the table and that and a heaping plate of biscuits was all they had for supper, except some very weak coffee. I must say the coffee we got at hotels in this country then never deserved the name, as you would never know that it was coffee only by the burnt grains that floated on top. Stewed chicken nearly always had some of the feathers left on as the tender hearted people couldn't bear to pull them all out at once. It was common at that time to drink out of yellow bowls instead of cups and saucers and glasses, and if they made jelly it was made with brown sugar and put in small stone jars. Pie plant was used later on for sauce and pies as people could afford sugar. And wild gooseberries grew here and made splendid pies, and even sheep-sorrel was greatly sought after for pies, and as the north half of LeRoy was vacant and only used for cow pasture for the town, in the spring time many women of the town could be seen gathering sorrel for pies, and dandy-lion for greens which seemed to grow plentifully for their benefit. Another device for roasting meat and turkey and also for baking bread, was a tin oven two feet long and two feet high with one side out. The top flared up and the bottom flared down. Then there were grates in it to set the pans on to hold the meat and bread. This was set up to a good fire and the reflection would bake or roast nicely. Still another way to bake was a brick oven built in the yard of clay and brick eight or ten feet long arched over the top, with flue at one end and door at the other. The bottom was plastered with clay and made very smooth and after it got dry was very hard and was ready for baking. This oven was generally used on Saturday or when a number were to be cooked for. A fire was built in this oven of dry wood and when it had burned long enough to heat it thoroughly, the fire was all taken out and bread, cake and perhaps a dozen pies, and anything they wanted to bake, were put in, the flue was covered and the iron door closed to keep the heat in, and everything would bake beautifully and could not be excelled by any modern device. In March, 1851, we came to Illinois by water; there were no railroads then. We landed at Pekin and came from there to Bloomington by stage. I do not think there was a fence between Pekin and Bloomington except a rail fence that surrounded the "Half-way House" where the stage stopped for dinner. The country seemed so wild and hundreds of cranes hovered over the stage with their unearthly noise making me desolate and home-sick, until we sat down to dinner. I made up my mind then that even Ken-

tucky could not beat that dinner. Why, we had the best of fried ham, mashed potatoes, beans, butter, syrup, pie and cookies, and have never seen such a large heaping plate of splendid fried eggs as they had, and biscuit and good coffee completed the meal. It was all so nicely gotten up and so well seasoned and prepared that I never forgot it, and so different from any other public house in this country then, and you would wonder where it came from, for the small house, and the small stable for the stage horses, were all there was in sight; not a neighbor, nor even a garden spot, nothing but the broad prairie as far as the eye could reach. The Weedham brothers from Farmer City on their way home from California, dressed alike in brown jeans suits, vests and all, and Esack Greenman who had been to St. Louis for groceries, and my father, two brothers and myself and the driver constituted the passengers for dinner. After the horses and all had eaten and rested we started for Bloomington, arriving at night and remained till morning when we secured a conveyance to LeRoy and found this a village without sidewalks. The houses were small one-story wooden structures with end to the street and only two of these had ever been painted. The arrival of our party created quite a stir in the town, and many a hand shake of welcome did the Weedman brothers get from their acquaintances, but the only person any of our family had ever seen was old Uncle Daniel Crumbaugh, who had a wagon with apples selling on the street, and was an uncle to my sister's husband, to whose house we were going, and of course we were glad to meet anyone we had ever heard of before.

But I keep getting over on the pioneer subject, so must get back to my eatables. It was a common thing in early times to gather wild grapes in the fall pick them off the stems, fill stone jars and cover with molasses; they would keep all winter and made a very rich pie. This was Orleans molasses. After this sorghum was grown by many and was a great improvement, and as time went on all things improved, until now cut glass is used instead of common yellow bowls, and Haviland china instead of the blue delft ware, and silver instead of the horn handle knives of early times, and fatal diseases have taken the place of

the old time, but never to be forgotten ague, of which every living soul had a taste, except my brother, who declared he would never have such a low disease and he never did.

And now in 1904 we find LeRoy a beautiful city of about two thousand inhabitants. As you will see it has not grown rapidly, springing up in a night as it were, as some mushroom cities have done, but its growth has been slow, sure and steady, growing faster each year and bids fair to improve more rapidly in the future. Substantial brick buildings have taken the place of small, wooden structures of the old time business part, and a new and beautiful addition has been added on the east in the last few years which is almost covered with new and handsome residences; and all over town elegant homes have been built, many by retired farmers who have come here to rest from their labors and spend their last days in this attractive city, which is blessed with four churches, two of them handsome edifices, a city hall, and a small pretty park with cement walks, adorns the center of town. Cement and brick sidewalks are everywhere in use, and we have two railroads, telephones, electric lights, the best fair in the county, with splendid grounds, and a canning factory is now being built west of town which promises to be quite a stimulus to business here. Many of our dwellings have all modern conveniences and improvements, with furnaces and hard and soft coal stoves to heat our houses, electric lights and steel ranges and oil stoves to cook on; and instead of the plain food of olden times we have all kinds of canned vegetables and fruit ready for the table; meat, fish and soup of many kinds, and bread, pie and all kinds of cake and pickles, everything ready to eat, and with our cold storage and facilities for transportation, our tables are supplied with viands from every known clime. And the north half of the town plot where once the gentle bovine lazily cropped the waving grass and the dandylion and sheep sorrel flourished now stands the handsome school building and many attractive dwellings. This is an outline picture of LeRoy in 1904. I have not mentioned the two banks and the many and varied business houses, but at present all are flourishing and the present outlook for LeRoy is encouraging to all classes.

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# Pioneer Fencing in Empire Township

By T. L. Buck

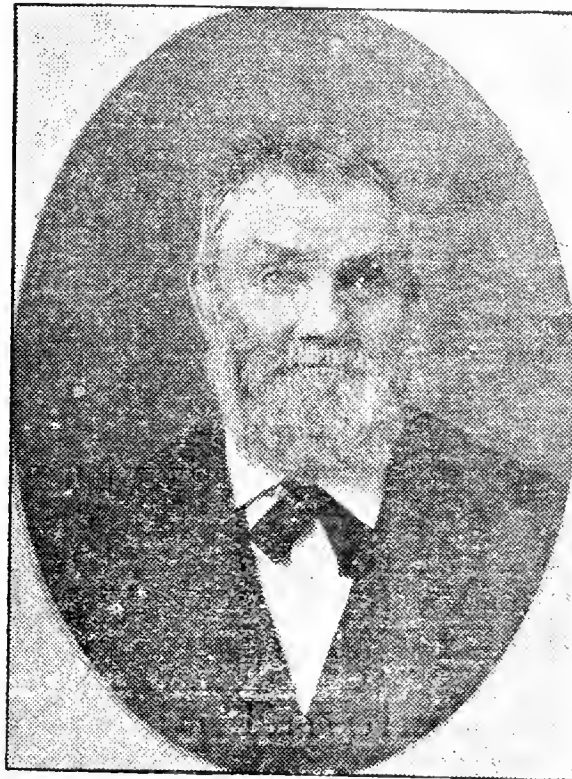
I HAVE BEEN chosen to write up the fencing of Empire Township and vicinity from the early settlement. The pioneer fencing was the old fashioned rail fence. Trees were cut down and the logs cut ten feet long and split in pieces about four inches square, owing to the timber. A good rail maker would cut and split two hundred rails in a day. Fourteen good rails and

eight stakes and three ground chunks three feet long made one rod of fence. The line was staked out and the rails were hauled and fourteen dropped in a pile about three feet apart, the length of the entire line making 1120 rails; two stakes and one ground chunk to the panel, which made what we used to call a good staked and double ridged fence. To build the fence, recollect, we are building 80 rods of old fashioned four foot worm-railed fence on a line east and west. We set a stake at each corner stone, then one-half way between so the three are in exact range; now we get a stake ten rods west of the corner stake in line with the other three, then go to the east corner and lay one end of the first

rail on the center of the corner stone, the other we lay two feet to the north, then place one end of a rail on that, and place the other end two feet south of the line, and you have what is called a four-foot worm-rail fence. To keep the fence in line we had what was called a worm stake. It was a stake about five feet long, pointed at one end; about one foot from the lower end an inch hole was made and one end of an inch pin two feet long was made fast; now by keeping the worm stake in range with the line stakes and by laying the ground rail at the point of the two-foot pin reversed at each corner, the corners were kept true. Then a chunk was put under each corner and the fence built six rails high. The stake holes were dug three feet from each corner and eight inches deep; then two

stakes were set slanting over each corner, then one end of the top rail was raised up and put between the stakes and that held the fence. The other rail was put on on top and we then had what was equal to an eight rail staked and double ridged fence. Of course there was various ways of building rail fences too numerous to mention. A little later on a fence called post and flat rail fence

was used to some extent for door yards, barn-lots and cross fences. The posts were split out about two by six inches and six feet long, five mortices two by four inches in each post; the post set two feet in the ground and eight feet apart; the flat rails were nine feet in length and split thin, the ends flattened so that two ends would go in the same mortice six inches. Five rails made a fence four feet high and very substantial. In fencing the old Oak Grove cemetery away back in the early forties, the west line was a post rail fence; the work was done by old settlers of those early times. This fence was as solid as though it was in one piece. After it was finished the men were talking about how far a light sound could be



T. L. Buck

heard, so one man went to the further end of the fence and tapped lightly with his knife blade and by putting the ear close to the post at the other end the sound could be plainly heard and I suppose that was the first telegraph dispatch sent over the line in this country. I think if he had have put his lips close to the post and spoke low we would have had the telephone sixty years ago. These two fences were prominent for a number of years. About 1850 the country began to be developed. It had been said that these prairies would never be settled. For quite a while the land office Danville was closed. In the meantime the pre-emption act was passed and became a law. About 1853 the building of the Illinois Central railroad through McLean county to Bloomington was a fact

and the state had donated to the Central road every other section of land on each side of road a number of miles wide which was soon put on the market and for several years there was a general rush for land regardless of price or location. Then the question of fencing came up. To fence with rails was impossible for there was not timber enough in the groves to begin with and there were no railroads at that time to ship in lumber and saw mills were scarce; besides the best timber was needed for posts, and the cry was what will we fence these lands with? About this time the hog law came in force; that gave some relief, for a man was not required to build a tight fence after this law had passed. A man could fence his farm with two boards or poles and the law would protect him, for every rough board or pole eight feet or three rods long were brought into use and nailed on posts with twenty penny nails. Then the experiment with the sod fence came. It was said a man could fence his farm of 160 acres and not use a stick of timber. The plow was drawn with four yoke of oxen; the line was staked out straight and the plow started turning over a sod six inches deep and twelve inches wide. Now from the bottom of the furrow to the top of the sod is twelve inches high; then came back on the other side with the same kind of a furrow; then two rounds and the fence was two feet wide and two feet high. The machine had a wing, or fender, with small rollers that could be raised and shoved toward the fence and carried the sod gradually back and laid it even on top of the other sod and then the cut was changed to ten inches, then two twelve inch sods were laid on top and that held the sod together. That made a sod fence two feet wide at the bottom and twelve inches at the top and four feet high, but at that time stock of all kinds run at large on the prairie and it was said it would be fun for a hundred head of cattle to horn down a mile of this fence, so the sod fence failed. The willow fence was tried by some farmers, but

they regretted it ever afterwards. A fence called the stob fence was used very extensively for a while. It took the best of splitting timber which was cut four and a-half feet in length, split into pickets, sharpened at one end and drove in the ground eight inches on line and three inches apart. A plank or slat three inches wide was nailed on top. Thousands of acres of land was fenced with this stob fence and it answered a very good purpose in its day. We had the grapevine picket fence. A man went to the woods and got a load of wild grape vines, set his posts five rods apart, stretched two vines three feet from the ground slack, the pickets were driven in the ground six inches and the vine crossed between each picket. It was an imitation of some of our woven wire fences of today. This man fenced in his calf pasture and that was all there was of it. But when the osage hedge was introduced that settled the question of fencing. In the meantime the railroads had got to Bloomington, lumber was shipped there and distributed all through this section of country. Later on we got a railroad through LeRoy, so that we have fencing lumber right at home. It is well known that barbed wire has formed a prominent part in fencing and many other kinds of wire fence we are familiar with, so I will leave it to some other historian to write up the wire fences later on.

In 1850 good land could be bought for \$1.25 per acre; now in the year 1904 if a man will be right quick about it he can buy some of the same land nicely improved at \$150 per acre.

In closing this subject my mind goes back in tender memory to those primitive days of the old log cabin with its clap board door and puncheon floor and to the old fashioned rail fence, and I sometimes wonder why some of our home poets do not write a poem on the old log cabin, and the old pioneer rail fence, the old fashioned fence, the staked and double ridged four foot rail fence of Buckles Grove.

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pray for it?



Or go after it with  
an axe?



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line?



Will you call  
on us?



Or shall we  
call on you?



# Pioneer Transportation in Empire Township

By Mrs. J. V. Smith



TRANSPORTATION, the advance agent of civilization, the power that enables the lonely frontiersman and the early dwellers in the rude hamlet to gather from the big world outside that which will broaden and brighten their lives, and by the same medium, those from older and thicker settled districts bring into the pioneer village newer ideas of business, laws and all the little amenities of life which follow the mingling of man with his fellows. The history of transportation is told in the same lines in common with all localities at the time of settlement; the evolution of the covered wagon of the old-time pioneer to the inter-urban trolley car of the 20th century, is as interesting as any tale of fiction.

The vanguard in the march of all western civilization has been the white-winged "prairie schooner," containing all the worldly possessions and loved ones of some adventurous soul who thinks to find in the untrodden prairies of the glowing west the Eldorado of his dreams. Tired and footsore at the close of some long day's wanderings, he comes to a beautiful spot for a night's camp, such a one as LeRoy must have been in those early years of the 19th century—slightly elevated above the adjoining plains, sheltered by forests abounding in wild game, watered by limpid streams, surrounded on all sides by immense prairies whose waving grasses and many hued flowers grew out of the richest soil the sun ever shone upon. What a paradise for the home-seeker! Our mover pitches his tent and this becomes the nucleus of our village. Others come along the trail and for the same good reasons set up their household gods, until our new settlement contains about twenty-five families. To be happy and contented in the new life means for communication with the dear ones at the old home must be had. As early as 1831 mail was brought to Cheney's Grove once a week by a route running from Danville through Bloomington to Pekin. It was a hard trip to Bloomington or Cheney's Grove for letters, and our settlers became determined to switch that mail-bag over to LeRoy. Cheney's



Mrs. J. V. Smith

Grove was as determined to keep it; the tug was a hard one, but LeRoy won of course and in 1838 became a station on the mail route established between Danville and Peoria. A postoffice was opened in the way-side inn kept by Mr. Hiram Buck, on the corner now occupied by the First National bank of LeRoy. Mr. Buck became our first postmaster as well as first hotel keeper, his daughter, Amanda—now Mrs. J. H. L. Crumbaugh—was sworn in as deputy postmistress and took personal charge of the office for several years.

She says the work of the position consisted in being able to extricate in seven minutes—the time allowed, from a bag intended for a stretch from Urbana to Pekin, all mail for LeRoy, Cheney's Grove and the settlements north, Marion, now DeWitt, and all settlements south, as these places sent a man once a week for mail.

The first service was by post-rider making his trips once, twice or three times a week, as the conditions of the roads would allow. In the spring when the bottom of the road was too far down, they were glad to get mail once in a while. One of the first mail carriers was Mr. Wm. Pierce, one of the early settlers. In time the needs of the growing village demanded accommodation for an occasional traveler with his little belongings and our post-rider became a stage driver, who announced the coming of the U. S. mail with the sonorous tones of a brass horn, and it is told that he became so proficient by practice that he could almost play a tune, its notes were eagerly welcomed for the most exciting event of the week was the arrival of the mail hack as it came rumbling in from space, sometimes covered with mud, often ice-clad like a ship in the Arctic. The driver was a hero who laughed at sloughs, washed-out bridges and bottomless roads. The mail-pouch he brought held a modest bunch of letters which the storekeeper could pigeon-hole without interrupting his trade. To hear from Ohio or back east was an event, and the distinguished individual who heard, passed his wafered letter around and told all the news it con-

ta ned. No deluge of magazines or periodicals burst from the old-time mail bag. Every man took his county paper, whether he paid its subscription or not, but only a few could afford the frivolous indulgence of the novel stories in the New York Ledger or Saturday Evening Post.

This driver often brought mysterious passengers, who briefly alighted at the tavern, then proceeded toward the end of the world. Occasionally a man of note dropped down from the big world outside. Abraham Lincoln once waited at our modest hostelry for a change of horses. Judge David Davis has been a passenger of the old coach when going over the country on legal business. The old stage often brought to our village the Hon. John Wentworth, for LeRoy was then in the same district politically as Chicago, representing this district, and on his way to the capitol, stopping at LeRoy. It is told that he was often the guest of Mr. Reuben Clearwaters, and that he was so tall—you know he was called Long John Wentworth—that Uncle Reuben had to make and keep for his use a bedstead of extra length, which, when not in use, was an object of curiosity to the passer by, on the outside of the modest log house. From 1842 to 1846 John E. McClun of Bloomington obtained the mail contracts of all routes coming into or through Bloomington. They were all carried on horseback except our line running from Peoria to Danville, over which mail and passengers were carried with considerable regularity, in two horse coaches three times a week. Carrying the mail in those days was attended with no little difficulty; the streams were mostly unbridged, and vehicles were often swamped in them and had to be pulled out by oxen. When the roads were at their worst, drivers would put the mail in a queensware crate on the front wheels of a wagon, hitch three horses to it and pull through that way. Stories have been told of drivers lost on these big prairies on dark and stormy nights, of swollen streams, of frozen hands and feet, and of a passenger once lost in a driving snow storm, appearing in Bloomington two days later. A Bloomington man named Burhance followed Judge McClun, and put on the route the first genuine stage coach with boot and other conveniences for carrying passengers. About 1850 Frink & Walker of Columbus, Ohio, secured contracts for a line of stages from Covington, Ind., to Peoria and beyond, they with the Western Stage Co., operated all the stage lines in this part of the state until the coming of the Illinois Central into Champaign. This old first mail route was not always under control of one firm or person, it was divided into sections, and these let out on contract by the government to the lowest responsible bidder for a term of four years. One section was from Urbana to Bloomington. Contractors paid their drivers five cents a mile for carrying passengers, for carrying the mail \$10 a month when driving two horses, \$12 when using four. Thousands of dollars were entrusted to their carrying, and bundles, as well, all sizes and values, from a diamond ring to a sewing machine, but neither history nor rumor doth record that ever one of them betrayed the trusts committed to their care. In 1854 B. R. M. Sils, who kept hotel on the corner where now stands Keenan's bank, became the contractor and ran the line until 1858, when the carrying of the U. S. mail between Bloomington and Urbana passed into the hands of Mr. Yontz Bonnett and J. V. Smith of LeRoy. In '59 Mr. Bonnett sold his interest to Smith, who held the contract for eight years, but in '63 sub-let the route from LeRoy to Bloomington to Mr. L. A. Rike, who was succeeded in 1866 by Robert Semple & Son, who carried the mail till railroad days. The eastern end of the line to Urbana was secured by a stranger, a star route man who underbid all home applicants. With the coming of the iron horse in 1870 we bade a final adieu to the old

stage line and its memories.

Can we, who ante-date these railroad days,  
Ever forget the old stage coach with its weaving ways  
The lurch and the lift of its cumbersome gear,  
Gave to our hearts both doubt and fear,  
Doubt, that we should ever reach the town,  
Fear, with each lurch, that the next, we'd go down.

I am told that this old state or national road, over which our mail was carried by horse for thirty-two years, has been changed but in few places in all these years. That the Big Four railroad in nearly all its length between Indianapolis and Peoria runs almost parallel to it.

Prior to the establishment of the mail route through LeRoy, it ran south of the village, coming from Mt. Pleasant, now Farmer City, crossed Salt creek at Caton's bridge, past the old Clearwater's farm, west to the Dickerson land, following the timber a short distance; the center across the open country, crossing the Kickapoo at what was then called Delta, a little north of Downs, then on to Bloomington. The first plan on record of a railroad running east and west through this county was proposed as early as 1836, and twelve miles of it was graded, east of Pekin. The scheme proved a failure at this time owing to a financial crash which prostrated all such enterprises. The project was revived in 1854 and again in '56, and in this year meetings were held along the eastern end of the line, it was then called the Danville & Bloomington railroad. A charter was obtained in 1857 and meetings again called along the line from Danville to Pekin; the panicky days of '57 again laid the scheme on the shelf and nothing more seems to have been done in the matter until after the war. In 1866 all business began to take on new activity, the increase in population with its attendant need of building material and the necessities of life and the hardships endured in marketing stock and grain called imperatively for better facilities of transportation. Meetings in favor of the old projected road were again called into action in all the larger towns along the line, the eastern end people met at Urbana in July, 1866; nothing was accomplished, after long consultation it was adjourned to meet in LeRoy, August 7th, delegates from the other meetings being present. Another was held on August 27, some opposition was manifested, but the friends of the road effected an organization, with C. R. Griggs of Urbana as president, W. T. McCord of Farmer City, vice president and Dr. Henry Conkling of Bloomington, secretary. The people of Empire deemed the building of this road of vital importance to them and went to work in earnest. By an affirmative vote a pledge was made for raising \$50,000 in twenty years 10 per cent bonds for the D., U., B. & P. R. R. Soon after this it was discovered that the company had not been organized in strict conformity to law. Bloomington had the building of another road on her hands and possibly did not act as quickly as she would otherwise have done, and little technicalities of the law too tedious to mention here, prevented our embryo road from being given legal life. In 1867 an act was passed by the legislature and charter granted giving to Empire Township authority to subscribe not more than \$250,000 in aid of such a road. In June of '67 vote of township was again taken, resulting a second time affirmatively by 202 to 6. The road was commenced, bonds issued and went with hundreds of like nature into the great pools of construction companies, who mortgaged them for half their face, then let them slide.

In October, '69 our little road was consolidated with and became the Indianapolis, Bloomington & Western and work came to a standstill, more bonds must be issued, the township authorities submitted the question of issuing



twenty five thousand additional dollars which resulted in the affirmative. From this time fewer obstacles arose, although at one time the legality of this second issue of bonds was questioned, but the U. S. court settled the matter in favor of the issue. To cut short a long story, the loyalty, staunchness and enterprise of its adherents resulted in the running of the first train over the road May 1st, 1870. A prouder, happier set of citizens could not be found than LeRoy possessed at this time, and she soon took upon herself the airs and organization of a city. But the restless western spirit of her wide-awake sons was not satisfied with one railroad. They seemed to feel that after paying \$75,000 toward its building, they were discriminated against in the matter of freights, taking the issue in their own hands, and after much canvassing, it was decided to ask the people along the proposed route for help to grade, bridge and tie a narrow gauge road from LeRoy to Rantoul, and to bond it for \$4,000 a mile for the iron. The building of the section of the road from LeRoy to Fisher, is, I believe, wholly a LeRoy enterprise, and no

history of our little city is complete without its mention. In March 1876 a company was formed to build a narrow gauge road to Fisher and meet there the road already finished to Rantoul. James Bishop was elected president, C. A. Barley, secretary, and Joseph Keenan, treasurer. Fifteen thousand dollars were subscribed to the stock, the death of Mr. Bishop put a stop to the matter for awhile. Early in 1878 B. J. Gifford of Rantoul became its president, the stock was increased to \$30,000, the right-of-way was mostly donated, and in ten months' time the road was built and in running order. Two-thirds of this stock was subscribed in grand old Empire, creating no debt.

Thus have we passed through all the evolutions of transportation save the last, but the breezes from the east bear to our eager ears the buzz of the trolley car as it whirls into Champaign, and knowing by the experience of the past that no enterprise is too gigantic for the brain or purse of McLean county's sons, we are sure that the years will be few and perhaps only months when we shall see Bloomington from the windows of an interurban electric car.

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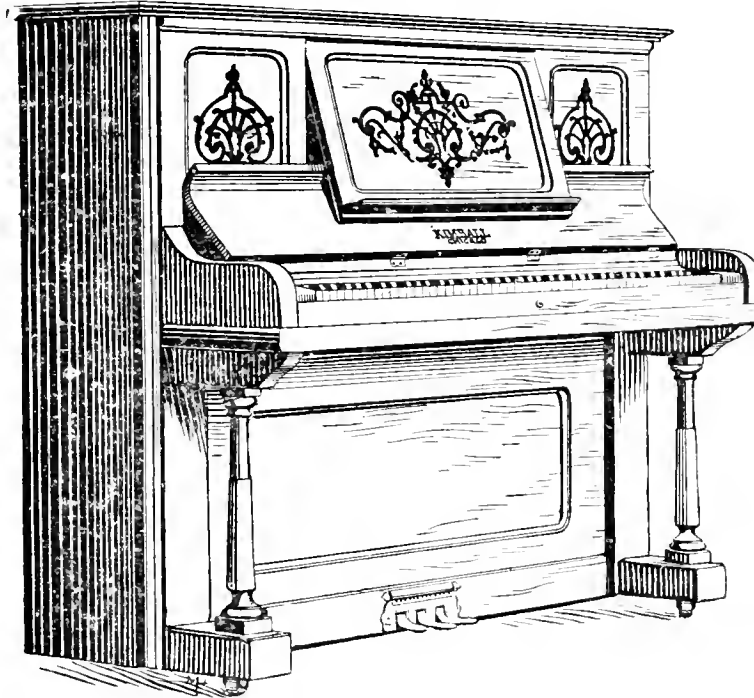
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# Good Old Times in Empire Township

By G. W. Hedrick

I DESIRE to present to you a much neglected subject. You have without doubt heard a great deal said about the hardships and privations of the early settlers in this country. What you have heard may be true in part, but the picture has been greatly overdrawn. Had you been present in these early days you would never have heard those settlers complaining or wishing themselves back to their native state where possible wealth and refinement abounded. No: this free, independent, easy life, just suited them. They were all poor and came here to get away from the restraints and demands of society in their mother country. They were happy and comfortable here, and had to make but a small effort comparatively, to secure a good living for themselves and their families. Their hogs were fattened on acorns and other nuts with which the woodlands abounded plentifully. Their cattle were raised on the prairie grass that waxed in luxuriance for miles around. Game was plentiful, and they had nothing to stimulate them to raise more than they could use themselves, as corn was very low in price and no demand for it only as a newcomer might want a small amount. Almost every family raised a patch of flax, and the women would spin and weave it into cloths, sheets, shirts, pants or anything they wanted to make of it. They also spun the thread to make these goods with. They also had sheep, and would spin and weave the wool into jeans for the men to wear and into linsey for the women's dresses. They likewise wove their own shawls and knit their own hose. They did not have to ruffle their dresses, but everything was made plain and comfortable. No worrying about styles or sitting up late to finish the elegant dress for some brilliant entertainment; no worrying about what to wear, or how to wear it: everything was plain, common, comfortable and healthy. The people were happy, and many of them were devout christians, and trusted the Lord with the faith of a child. More than one whom I have personally known, made it a rule of their lives before they lay down at night, to think over all they had done, and said through the day; and ask God's forgiveness for any sins they had committed, and His blessing on all their good deeds. Religious meetings were held around at the houses of settlers, and in summer time in the groves. Camp meetings were held every fall in the different groves near a good spring of water and other natural advantages.

They would build their tents and hold meetings for weeks; some of these tents were made of wood, others of canvas. These meetings were greatly enjoyed by all. Of course all were not religious; some indulged in such worldly sports as horseracing, dancing, jumping, running, boxing, wrestling, and sometimes a little whisky was on hand and a general good time was had all around. But the people as a rule were honest, good-hearted, whole-souled and clever; never too busy to help one another, especially ready and willing to assist a newcomer. They often went twenty or thirty miles to help others build their houses, and the women would make quiltings and wool pickings, and visit a great deal, hitching up the two-horse wagon and taking the whole family. Truly they were a happy people. They lived in the grandest country the world has ever seen. There was plenty of wild fruit of every kind; blackberries were large, fine and plentiful, strawberries also abounded, raspberries were luscious and grew in great quantities, and plums were in abundance. No wild animals were there to make the settlers afraid as there were in many new countries; and the Indians were friendly and never were known to molest the whites; not a drop of white blood has ever been shed by an Indian in McLean county.



G. W. Hedrick

The timber and prairie seemed to be located just to suit man's taste. With the finest of timber in the grove, and the grandest, most fer-

tile, most productive and beautiful country it ever fell to the lot of man to possess, why should not they have been happy? To my mind it far surpassed the land of Canaan when God took Abraham and showed it to him, or when He told Isreal to go up and possess it. For they had an enemy to subdue, and it took many hundred years to dispossess that enemy; and if ever a land literally flowed with milk and honey this did. There were plenty of cows, and many of the hollow trees were filled with the best of honey made from the flowers that covered the vast prairies. And what a sight to gladden the eye of the beholder were the many hued and beautiful flowers that grew everywhere.

Compare this country if you please, with Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio, and many other states; see what they had to contend with. Why, they could not have even a garden spot without cutting down the heavy timber that covered those new countries; and too much rock has always been a great nuisance and hindrance to men set

tling in a new country. Then too, the Indians have always interfered with the early comers in almost every state save this. Just think of the advantages of this over every other country. Well did ex Governor Joe Fifer say in the halls of the legislature: That McLean county was the breast-pin of Illinois; and Gardner Randolph, who first settled in Randolph's grove, said after traveling over many countries in quest of a home: "This is good enough for anybody." This certainly is God's favored land, and at any time has there been anyone to molest or make you afraid, but all were free to roam and go as they choose, and today I know of no other country that has so many advantages and so few disadvantages as this. As regards the health of the people it is as good as can be found anywhere. Their virtue and integrity as a people is unquestioned. The climate, take it the year round, is first class. The products of the soil in quality, in quantity, and variety cannot be excelled. And today the farm lands of McLean county are yielding their owners a clear income of from four and a-half to eight dollars per acre, and have been doing so for years, and bid fair to do the same thing for all time to come.

We also have a number of educated, talented and distinguished persons born in Empire Township. Our present representative to the legislature, in which we all take pride, is, and has long been a resident of our beautiful city of LeRoy, and John A. Sterling, the present member of congress from this district, of whom we also are justly proud, was born, raised and educated in Empire Township. I feel proud and glad that I can claim this for my birthplace, and that I have been identified for sixty-seven years with its growth and development all along these lines that go to make this a great and glorious country.

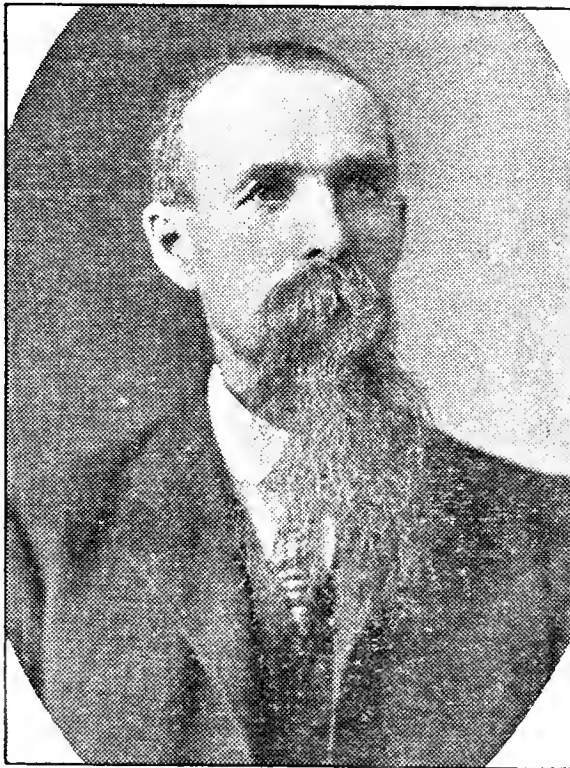
May I say in conclusion that the reason I have been induced to write this paper, is the fact that at every Old Settler's meeting I have attended, the speakers are always harping on the hardships and privations of the early settlers, when they should at least have been willing to recount to us and to our children something of the good things and the good times enjoyed by those who first made their homes in this goodly land.

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Everything in  
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"The recollection of Quality remains long  
after the Price is forgotten."

# Pioneer Schools of Empire Township

By Mrs. Adam Murray

WHEN the morning stars sang together, and primeval light was day and primeval darkness night; when Adam and Eve, our noted ancestors, tasted of the tree of knowledge—education began. As investigators at one fell swoop they added immensely to the sum of human knowledge.

Philosophy was born, scientific research began, and this early searcher after wisdom and wisdom's ways, footsore and weary, a wanderer of the earth earthy, evolved the great truth of the "why and wherefore" that is yet the unsolvable problem.

Knowledge is power and the adding thereto the work of all mankind. Every new thought, every generous truth, every kindly act is the off spring of some great mind stored with years and years of earnest thought and study.

On July 5th, 1778, the first note of education was sounded in the north-western territory by the Rev. Manasseh Cutler of Massachusetts. His portrait should have a place of honor in every school in this territory. The point to be considered No. 2. In articles of compact; provisions for schools, giving one section for a seminary, and and every section No. 16, in each township. That is one thirty-sixth of all the lands for public schools.

"Be it forever remembered that this compact declared that religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education should always be encouraged."

McLean county obtained thirty-seven thousand acres from the United States in virtue of the Swamp Land Act. These lands were sold for \$130,000 and the proceeds devoted to educational purposes: \$70,000 to the State Normal, and the rest distributed for the benefit of the common schools. The sale of the swamp lands was effected in 1851 through Judge Merriman. A great mistake, as time has proven, but the great need of money for public uses, was the cause for the short sightedness at the time.

Population of LeRoy in 1850 was 210. The town of LeRoy was incorporated in 1855.

Empire in the southern tier of townships is eight miles long by six east and west, and is described as town 22 north, range 4 east, and the first twelve sections of town 21 range 4 east of the third principal meridian.

Public education as we know it, is the product of the present century. Previous to 1851 only the rudiments of the common schools, of systems of organization, of support by state, of co-education, in fact of education for girls at all, were found. The common schools began in pauper or charity schools, the better classes educated their children at home or in private schools. The mingling of the classes with the masses was not yet to be endured. Parochial schools continued long after the union of church and state politically had ceased.

Now in order to get at this subject properly I will have to go back to the township organization and describe some of the earlier schools of this community. The Clearwater school house was erected in 1832 by our sturdy pioneers, was built of logs, chinked and daubed, to keep out the cold, with material mud and sand, both plentiful and economical, economy being a great consideration in these days. Windows were made by cutting out a log and pasting in greased oaper for light. A large fireplace was built at one end whose capacious throat took most of the heat out of doors, around which the youngsters of that day sat on logs piled to replenish the fire, and acted very much as

obstreperous youths do today. Benches to sit upon were made of planks hewn as smooth as possible with the only available tools, and adz, ax, Jack-plane, drawing-kife, and possibly a pocket knife; made of uniform height, six inches wide, without any backs, with peg legs; the smaller children's feet not touching the floor. A taller and little wider one was made for those who wrote. Copies were written by the teacher, who both made and repaired their pens, which were made of goose quills.

The requirements of a teacher being a knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic, and a bundle of sticks. Corporal punishment was in full blast, and if the child needed it, and the teacher had failed to provide himself the culprit was sent after switches, which he duly ringed with his knife if he had one, otherwise selected those that would break easy, proceeding leisurely along back, casting his eyes around for an extra something

to put under his coat, invariably saying as he took his seat, that "it didn't hurt much."

The first teacher was William Johnson who was lame but I am told what he lacked in the activity of his legs he made up with his arms and "walloped" the boys in first class style. The worst punishment was with a rule, a stick made of hickory about a foot long, and first used to line paper. The child was told to come forward, hold out the hand, the teacher taking hold of the fingers, bending them back and slapping the palm: "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord," but vengeance was in the child's heart by the time he was through, and in time the rule disappeared or something else was done to get even with the teacher.

The teacher boarded around a week for a scholar, each parent furnishing a quarter of a cord of wood to warm the school house. Teacher and pupils cutting it at noon and recess. It was always green and full of sap, sled length, and did not burn very well; covered at night to fire in the morning; real cold nights it generally went out, and someone had to go to some house and borrow fire to start with.

Other teachers were Mr. and Mrs. Amasa Washburn, Mr. Gaunt, Mr. Thompson and James Vandeventer



Mrs. Adam Murray

Gradually schools were started in different parts of the country and the people became more interested in the subject of education. Schools were supported by contribution, that is some one would go around with a paper and have the parents sign the number they would send; thus the tuition was paid by the pupils. The schools were only kept open a few months in the year.

The first school taught in LeRoy was taught in a room standing where Nelson Humphrey now lives (512 North Walnut street). First teacher was James Lincoln. The resin weeds grew thick and tall, almost as the house. The children gathered the resin in great balls, chewed it for gum and traded it for pencils—goose quills, and taffy, played hoop and hide in the tall weeds and had a better time than they have today. Just ask some of the men and women of whitened locks, their faces will beam with the memory—that precious heirloom of ages—will open up its pages, and we know that the half has never been told, that the books have failed to record them satisfactorily.

The first schoolhouse built in LeRoy for school purposes especially, stood where Mr. T. L. Parks now lives (311 North Main. A room 24x30, frame, with a large loft in it. One who was there told me that one day they carefully fastened all the windows, locked the door, and sat quietly waiting the teacher's coming. After having kept them waiting and wondering awhile the teacher dropped among them from the loft. Very much crestfallen they all took their seats, fun over for that day at least.

Master would go around and help them with their arithmetic. Slate pencils were put in goose-quills so as to use them all up, girls and boys 13 and 14 went bare-foot to school in summer; stood in class of reading and spelling; children played ball, black-man, jumped the grapevine, mumble-peg, and skinned the cat, in what is now the heart of the city. D. P. Bunn taught here in 1839-40, boarded at Hiram Buck's. Children sang patriotic songs of Tippecanoe and Tyler too.

The two mill tax went into operation, which distributed a respectable sum to the counties annually and was used exclusively in the common schools. For years there was a combination of "free schools" and "pay schools." The public money formed the basis, it was used under certain condition, either in a wholly free school or in one where those who were able and willing paid a subscription to help the good cause along.

In 1854-55-56 there was a breaking away from isolated efforts toward system and supervision. System has this in its favor that it makes supervision possible. Mr. J. H. L. Crumbaugh, who taught in 1856, says that people were dissatisfied, wanted better schools, better teachers. The fact that a man could read, write and cipher was not enough education for the times. Great big boys came to school to him, larger than himself, and he was no midget. But the people were progressive. To need was to have. The same energy and pluck that had tided them over other obstacles came to their aid and the citizens of the little village rose to the occasion. A new seminary was built, somewhere between the years 1854-5 under the auspices of the Cumberland church. Rev. Robert Patten had charge of it from 1854 to '57. The seminary was considerably in advance of the preceding schools. Some of the noble men and women who walk your streets today got all their education inside its sheltering walls, others grace their stations in various parts of the state, while others have gone

to that bourne where none return. The seminary has the reputation of turning out the youngest teacher on record—one just sixteen years old. The building stood where S. D. VanDeventer's residence now is (412 North Chestnut street), and was used by the graded school until the new brick edifice was completed when it was moved and became a part of the hotel on the corner of Main and Chestnut.

In 1864 the citizens decided to have better. Directors B. F. Parks, Dr. Cheney and E. E. Greenman purchased block 112 of Conkling's addition, paying \$150, and erected a two-story brick school house. As before, it soon over-run its capacity. An ell was built on the north side. More room, more teachers; the rooms were not properly ventilated; could not keep them warm; clamor grew until in 1892, the old building was torn down and the present commodious brick and stone building with more modern improvements built, at a cost of \$11,000, under the directors—Joseph Keenan, president; S. L. Langdon, secretary; Robert Murray, Dr. J. A. Tuthill, Dr. John Haig, L. A. Reynolds. Unfortunately a disastrous fire in 1874 destroyed the town records, otherwise we might have obtained some valuable data along this line.

The following statistics have been furnished by Superintendent McDowell: The LeRoy public schools were established in 1857 and have grown until there are three hundred and fifty four pupils enrolled. There are thirty more pupils this year than last, and the enrollment shows twenty more boys than girls. The percent of attendance for this year—1903-4—was 94. Besides the regular course in the common branches there is a course in drawing and music, and hopes are entertained that a teacher who can devote all her time to these necessary arts will be regularly employed. In the high school there are fifty-four pupils and the house is comparatively new, yet it is not large enough to accommodate comfortably all enrolled, besides others who should be there.

The present Board of Education is A. J. Keenan, president; M. A. Cline, secretary; committees: Supplies—M. A. Cline, J. T. Sarver, E. D. Riddle; teachers—Mrs. J. V. Smith, W. W. Rike, T. L. Parks; building and grounds—W. W. Rike, T. L. Parks, J. T. Sarver; finance—E. D. Riddle, Mrs. J. V. Smith, M. A. Cline.

Principals since 1854: 1854-7, Rev. Robert Patten; '57-8, John Long; '58-9, Miss Maltby; '59-60, A. B. Conkling; '60-1, Mr. Harris; '61-2, W. A. Monroe; '62-3, M. Huffman; '63-64, Noah Wamling; '64-5, W. A. Monroe, second term; '65-7, D. C. Clark; '67-8, W. A. Monroe, third term; '68-9, J. W. Barley; '69-70, John X. Wilson; '70-71, Mr. Shirk; '71-74, C. A. Barley; '74-84, M. Jess; '81-7, W. H. Chamberlin; '87-90, L. S. Kilborn; '90-2, J. W. Tavener; '92-5, F. G. Blair; '95-6, B. F. Templeton; '96-00, B. C. Moore; '00-1, C. J. Posey; '01-3, S. K. McDowell.

District 34, teacher, Alexander Humphreys; district 35, Jerome Harper; district 36, Lucy Youngman; district 37, S. M. Kies; district 38, Mollie Gannon; district 39, Carrie Chase; district 40, S. K. McDowell; district 41, Charles Williams; district 42, Anna Wall; district 43, Gertrude Wightman. Comprise the Township of Empire; all progressive, successful schools. Some have started libraries; yards neat, and teachers earnest, conscientious workers.

To the McLean County History, to J. H. L. Crumbaugh and wife, to Prof. McDowell and to our county superintendent, John S. Wren, I return thanks for assistance rendered in the preparation of this paper.



# Churches of Empire Township

By Mrs. E. B. Young



**THE OLD MEETING HOUSE**—The pen pictures and memories of the old-time churches rank first in the history of old towns. There is the old meeting house, solemn and sleepy; bumble bees humming about; the horses tied to the fence stamping at the flies; the choir in the gallery pitching the tune by striking the pulpit with the tuning fork; farmers in their sleeves, arousing from their slumbers in time to join the doxology. But the old church was filled from floor to ceiling with hearty, old-fashioned fellowship religion, one ounce of which was worth a ton of the spurious article: "Where's the old churches, the old ministers now? Where's the joyful choir of singers? Where the leaders who sat around the pulpit saying Amen? and listening until the two hours' sermon got to the seventeenthly's." But no richer legacy has ever been given to the children of our forefathers than the training received in the old meeting house. It is the church pioneers—to those who have labored and toiled—as we who have reaped and garnered from what they have sown, cannot realize. It is to these Christian pioneers who founded our churches and schools (and we are very, very thankful for the few who are spared to be with us today) that our fair city owes its spiritual progress and influence, the stability and integrity of its citizenship. It is the church people we owe much of the progress—the success—that has been accomplished that never could have been attained otherwise. These are the fruits of the labors of the men and women who have established our grand schools and magnificent churches. The building of one or two churches in the average town is considered the quota, but here we have four commodious places of worship. This could not have been accomplished without enterprising citizens, possessing a spirit of good will and fellowship, that finds expression in many practical ways and has drawn to the support of each denomination a strong membership of faithful followers. In LeRoy seventy-five years ago churches and school houses were like "angels' visits, few and far between." Today we have four prosperous churches in our little city and about one thousand members. The names of these churches under denominational titles are as follows: Methodist Episcopal, Cumberland Presbyterian, Christian and Universalist. The churches having the largest membership are the M. E. and C. P. churches. Each one maintains Sabbath schools, ladies' aid and missionary societies doing work for home and foreign fields. Financially they are reported in better condition than for many years; they are all nearly out of debt and the outlook is promising for the future. The most successful churches are following in the Master's footsteps; the wise leaders realizing the great work to be accomplished. When pastors and members unite and work together for the greatest good of all, for "in union there is strength," what encouragement, when their

one thousand members co-operate and work in harmony for the higher life and best interests of the Christian churches and the entire city. In the hearts of all true church members their church is regarded as their second home; second in the home feeling of sacred memories and associations. This feeling is in unison with the deep affection that exists in all true home and church life.

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH HISTORY**—The Christian church in LeRoy was organized in 1888 by Elder T. T. Holton, now of Lincoln. A Mrs. Clark when dying had requested the services of a minister of this faith, and Mr. Holton was called upon. Soon after this a few members of the church

commenced holding services together in the C. P. church, others were added at intervals, and a church organization was completed. A building committee was selected consisting of Mrs. James Bonnett, Mrs. S. C. Kaufman, L. C. Crumbaugh, Asa Scott and Elder Clemens, and the present house of worship on the corner of Cherry and Walnut was erected and dedicated on November 8th, 1891, by T. M. Rains, secretary of the Foreign Missionary Society. Mr. Clemens served as preacher for a short time, he being followed by Mr. Shellenberger, whose pastorate was brief. Then R. E. Howell came and held a series of special meetings, resulting in ninety-seven accessions. R. Leland Brown was the next pastor, serving the church for one year and a half. He was followed by Mr. York, whose work was successful during a brief pastorate. E. O. Sharpe was the next minister. During his stay of a little longer than two years, the debt on the church



Mrs. E. B. Young

property was paid and many new members brought in. On September 1st, 1899, F. A. Sword began a pastorate which lasted three years. He is lovingly held in remembrance by all for his work's sake. L. M. Weimer and H. C. Patterson then served the church for very brief terms. During Mr. Patterson's stay of a few months the church building was repaired and beautified and a parsonage purchased at a cost of about \$1500. The church was thoroughly reorganized, placed upon a firm financial basis, and then Rev. Charles Bloom of New York called to serve as pastor. The church has just closed what has been in many respects the best year of its history. The outlay for running expenses has been larger than ever before but all bills have been met and a balance remains in the treasury. The Sunday school has increased to 275 members and still being added to. The Endeavor is sustained by a large membership. The Christian Reapers Society is doing splendid work. This church organization being comparatively new in this city, necessarily the history is brief.

Rev. Bloom the present pastor, is young and enthusiastic, and has been very successful in all his ministrations and undertakings. As a preacher he represents in his own personality what he urges upon his followers. There is no question as to his ability, "for he has run long and

hard with the footman" and will be prepared for the results that follow. His parishioners look for success and advancement confidently.

**UNIVERSALIST CHURCH HISTORY**—Mr. Hiram Buck, a hotel keeper in LeRoy, entertained a stranger who proved to be Rev. E. Manford, in the years before 1840. When they found both were Universalists they planned the Universalist service in an empty building nearby, illuminated by one tallow candle. About a year later another guest proved to be a Universalist minister—Rev. I. M. Westfall. This time the school house was used in daylight for a service. In 1844 Rev. Manford again passed this way on his wedding trip and again preached to those who wished to hear what a Universalist minister had to say. For years Manford from time to time thus preached, at one time remaining a week and preached every evening. In the early part of 1850 Rev. F. J. Briggs preached here in a room over a store where the church now stands. He preached regularly at two different times in 1850 and 1860. Rev. D. P. Bunn, who formerly resided in this vicinity, became a Universalist and began to preach. Manford, Briggs and Bunn were the preachers more or less frequently during the fifties. Between '68 and '72 Mr. Bunn preached here once a month. Baker Greenman's Hall was the place of services for years. A Mr. Webb supplied the pulpit for six months in '61, which he left for a chaplaincy in the army. A Mr. Chase was the preacher for a time. About \$2000 had been given by Universalists when the old Methodist church was built on the assurance that the basement would be free for use for all moral purposes. The Universalists met there for a time; (the time came when the gathering for an announced Universalist service found the doors locked); then the services were held in Keenan's hall. For years the services were occasional, conducted by Mr. Manford in his travels and then Mr. Bunn was called to preach for a time. In the year 1880 Rev. Thomas Woodrow settled in LeRoy and preached in Keenan's hall on alternate Sundays. He organized the church and planned to build a church building but did not accomplish it. Miss Carrie Brainard came in 1883, was ordained here, and at once set to work, and through her earnest efforts and enthusiasm the present church building was erected and dedicated May 18th, 1884. It was in 1883, during this faithful woman's ministry, the first church aid society, Mercy Chapel Gleaners, was organized, rendering valuable assistance not only at that period, but up to the present time. After several years pastorate the work went on by occasional work by State Superintendents Powers, Tomlinson and Brigham. Students from Lombard Theological School at Galesburg supplied the pulpit for some time. Rev. C. A. Garst and Dr. Straub served half-time here for a season. The late Rev. Charles A. Garst, whose untimely death was sincerely mourned by all who know him, as one of "nature's noblest men," was for one short year the beloved pastor of this parish.

Dr. Cook, one of the ablest and most successful organizers of this church, took up the full time pastoral work in 1896 and remained for five years, giving up the work for the State Superintendency of Churches. Rev. Carney followed him for three years and was a faithful and efficient minister, and Dr. McQueary, a very faithful preacher, supplied for a time, less than a year. Then the present pastor, Rev. W. E. Leavitt, came during the mid-summer of 1900 and remains at present time, as the revered pastor to interpret the glad gospel news to faithful members of Mercy Chapel.

The Sunday school is well established, also the Junior Y. P. C. W. is attended by a good membership.

The brief sketch covers a great deal of interesting history, the old phase of religious thought and practice—

the coming of a new idea and long years of earnest controversy and antagonism in feeling and act—to the days of toleration and fraternal intercourse, and co-operation. The few words sketch quickly what in detail would require pages of history, phases of strenuous life and changes of the sixty years transition.

This church fills a want in the community, and has taken on a new lease of life in the last few years and has reached a position complimentary to both pastor and people.

**METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH HISTORY**—The history of the Methodist Church in LeRoy runs back into pioneer days. Three-quarters of a century ago, when the great prairie state of Illinois was one vast plain, full of wild beasts and wild men, the itinerant Methodist preacher, true to his instinct, came to lead the way to civilization, and to point men and women to the Land of Promise, and to the City that hath foundations whose maker is God. In 1830 Rev. James Latta, a missionary was preaching throughout the territory. In 1831 Rev. S. R. Begg organized a class of eleven members and held preaching in the house of Wm. Conaway. The following are the names of the original Methodist class: Silas Watters, class leader, William, Nancy and Chalton Conaway, Matilda Barnett, James Merrifield and wife, Jane and Rachel Conaway, Catharine Barnett, and Silas and Christina Watters. The circuit then embraced Hurley's Grove (Farmer City,) Old Town, Bloomington, Randolph's Grove and Hidell's Grove (Clinton,) Rev. Wm. Crissey and Wm. Royal followed Brother Begg. From 1834 to 1838 the preachers were Revs. Hall, Cummings, French and Mosier; preaching in Clearwater school house. In 1838 Edgar Conklin gave the ground where Mr. Melvin Cline's residence now stands for a church site. After an heroic effort a building 45x30 feet was completed and ready for worship by the following year. History records that the pulpit was a three-story affair and from this high position the preacher sounded no uncertain trumpet. The pastors who occupied the pulpit during the life of this building, as can be remembered, were Revs. Bird, Gentry, Rucker, Hendal, heroic old Sam Martin, Samson Shinn, Preston Wood, Mortin, Emerson, Barthlew, Aymold, Harker, Smith and Amos Garner. The old church was finally sold and a more commodious brick edifice erected in 1866, at a cost of \$10,000. Amos Gardner was the pastor and Silas Watters and Deacon Moorehouse were the leading spirits in the enterprise. The old deed shows that the lot was purchased from Dr. Suggett, and was deeded to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in LeRoy. The following were the Trustees:—Silas Watters, James Kimler, Mahlon Bishop, D. L. Moorehouse, W. F. Davidson, Henry Long, Henry C. Dickerson and T. J. Barnett. None but self-sacrificing, heroic men could have made possible so good a building at a time when material and work were so expensive. The following pastors have been stationed here and preached in the old church in the past thirty-six years:—Greenberry Gardner, J. B. Seymore, P. C. Carroll, Bates, Obenichine, Lacey, DeClark, V. C. Randolph, W. H. Cline, S. H. Whitlock, J. B. Seymore (second term,) A. S. McCoy, J. D. Fry, W. H. H. Moore, J. R. Maxfield, J. C. Kellar, E. A. Hamilton, M. Auer, W. M. K. Gooding, J. M. West, B. F. Shipp and T. Clark. During these years many have been added to the church—many of whom have gone to other cities and states, and no small number to their eternal home.

The financial conditions have greatly changed since those days. The records show that in the year 1856, this charge paid Preston Wood \$300 and table supplies. It now pays its pastor \$1,100 and furnishes one of the best residences in the city. The membership at present numbers about 400, among whom are some of the noblest sons and daughters of Wesley. We have Sunday school with

an enrollment of 250; an Epworth League with 100 members; a Junior League with a membership of 75; a Womans Home Missionary Society; a Ladies Society; a Queen Ester Circle, and a Busy Bee Mission Band, all of which aid the work of the church and make it influential in the community for good.

The men and women who laid the foundation of Methodism in this charge were of pure Wesleyan type; they did not hesitate to refute what to them was heresy, or denounce in saint and sinner what they deemed sinful. If they felt like saying Amen, they said it, if they wanted to shout, they shouted. People in those days were mostly poor and their homes did not have luxuries of these days, but stood wide open to the brethren and on quarterly meeting occasions it was no uncommon thing to have from five to fifteen people in the house for two or three days. What glorious times they had. Fried chicken and corn bread baked in the old fashioned oven; what zeal, what sacrifice, what sermons, what camp meetings, what joy in believing. The people came then for fifteen or twenty miles and stayed until it was over. Time would fail me to speak of Father Silas Watters, John Watters, Deacon Moorehouse, James Kimler, Grand-father Bishop, Collins, Whitaker, Null and a host of glorious women, of whom are, Sisters Conkling, Gibbs, Barr, Long, Rike, Kimler, Johnson, Baddley, King, Mrs. James Kimler, Morehouse, Morris, Haig, Martin, Hendryx and Kershaw, who gave the first \$200 toward this new temple. These all "died in the faith," but they have gone to a better country, that is a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city.

"Servants of God, well done,

Thy glorious warfare's past;  
The battle's fought, the race is won  
And thou art crowned at last."

The present house of worship is one of the most modern edifices in Central Illinois and was erected during the summer of 1902 at a cost of \$18,000. It was dedicated on January 3, 1903. Rev. T. C. Hiff, D. D., preached the dedicatory sermon. The church is a monument to the energy of Rev. Thornton Clark, who was both solicitor and chairman of the Building Committee.

The exterior dimensions of this new building is 98x70 feet. On the first floor is the main auditorium, Sunday school room, six class rooms and three vestibules. The

second floor has the grand parlor, ladies parlor, cloak room, dining room, kitchen and the pastor's study. It is of red Danville brick, Bedford stone trimmings, Bangor slate roof, opalescent glass windows. The auditorium is finished in quarter sawed white oak, the rest in white southern pine, walls frescoed, lighted with electricity and heated by two large tubular air furnaces. The seating capacity of the auditorium and Sunday school room combined is 600.

At the last annual Conference Mr. L. J. Owen, a member of the church, was honored by being elected to the next General Conference, which meets in Los Angeles, California—the highest honors in the gift of the Church to a Layman.

The pastors of this church have usually been good men and fearless in their preaching of what they believed to be true. With charity for all and malice toward none this church is a blessing to many and holds an open door to all.

It has been four years since Rev. Clark took charge of this church, and his administration has been very successful, not only from a financial standpoint, but from a spiritual standpoint, as well. No minister ever at this charge did more for the success of church and citizens of LeRoy than Rev. Clark.

Our churches are the beacon light of our city, holding aloft the ideals that insure a great and glorious future.

In compiling a descriptive history of the churches, it is fitting that we pay tribute to the pastors, the representatives of the churches who seem peculiarly adapted to their various charges. They are remarkable for their great preparation for their life's work. They are ministers that would not be unscholarly men if they could; they could not be the embodiment of intellectual narrowness and one-sidedness if they would. The two tendencies, happiest of ideal conditions, the two correct each other: their union of effort for the spiritual and moral good of the entire city is gratifying in a high degree. We are indebted to City Attorney Riddle, Revs. Clark, Bloom and Leavitt, for their assistance and courtesy in furnishing history, accurate figures and dates of their respective churches; it is owing to this fact, principally, that this history of our citizen's most valued possessions, is probably the most complete and accurate ever given.

**E. D. Riddle**

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and Notary Public*

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Collections, Settlements of Estates and  
general legal business given prompt and  
careful attention. A A A A A*

**LeROY, ILLINOIS**



# Old Books

By Mrs. John McConnell

BOOKS are some of the best friends of civilization. Of all the privileges we enjoy in this Twentieth Century there is none, perhaps, for which we ought to be more thankful than for the pleasure derived from our easy access to books. The feeling that books are real friends is present to all who really love books. Some relate to us the history and events of past ages, while others teach us how to live, and others, how to die; some, by amusing, drive away our cares and troubles and lighten our spirits; others open up to us various avenues and upon their information we can safely rely. We only partially appreciate our good fortune in belonging to the Twentieth Century, and some times we wish that we had not lived quite so soon, and long for a glimpse of the books of the future—even the school books of one hundred years hence—as we long to see the books of the century past. A hundred years ago books were extremely expensive and hard to get, and many of our most delightful books were still unwritten, such as the works of Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Balmer, Lytton and others, not to mention living authors. Old books are our most precious inheritance. We may now sit in our libraries and yet be in all the quarters of the earth. We may travel with captain Cook or Darwin, or with Kingsley or Ruskin, who can show us more than ever we could see for ourselves. The world of books indeed has no limits. Humbolt will carry us away far beyond the sun or the stars. History stretches out behind us, and geology will carry us back millions of years before the creation of man. We

Abbey and Robinson Crusoe. The old school books were regarded as sacred treasures. Webster's primer and reader, and later, Webster's speller, dictionary, McGuffey's and Saunder's readers and spellers. The Bible was used as a text book and reader in many schools. There is a struggle for existence and a survival of the fittest among books as in histories. "Age is a recommendation in four things"—old wood to burn, old wine to drink, old friends to trust and old books to read—this last is accepted with qualifications, as the latest books of history and science contain the most accurate information, the most trustworthy conclusions, while the books of older histories of

racés and people have great interest and fascination from their very age and distance, yet we must admit that we enjoy and feel more at home with those of our century. The history of our own nation, our own state, county and town, and our own people. To the lover of books the very mention of the essays of Bacon, Addison, McCauley, Hume, Ruskin and Emerson, and the names of Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Longfellow bring a crowd of memories and recollections of pleasant home hours after the labors and cares of the day. The next decade will be of great value to the already priceless work of the McLean County Historical Society in the way of donations of books. The time allotted men will have passed with those who have participated in the history of the state and county—Books, papers, manuscripts in great quantities will be at the service of this society. The continued activities of this association in the affairs of



Mrs. John McConnell

can make our own library a garden of Eden without its one drawback, for all is open to us including the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, for which we are told our first Mother sacrificed all the rest. Here we may not read only the history of our United States, of our grand state of Illinois, of our grand county of McLean and our native town of LeRoy, but we may read the most important histories of the world; the most exciting travels, most interesting stories and beautiful poems. In fancy we may meet the most eminent statesmen, poets and philosophers.

In the old days books were rare and dear. Our ancestors had great difficulty in procuring them. We remember when we could extract pleasure in committing the almanac to memory, and the pride and satisfaction experienced in the possession of a copy of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Pilgrims' Progress, Arabian Nights, Children of the

McLean county is assured to the satisfaction of all lovers of history and its preservation know that their contributions will be in good company. Enrolled and deposited with this society will be every kind of book printed in Illinois in the form of public document, history and general literature, books from the libraries of presidents, eminent men and authors. The idea prevails quite naturally, perhaps, that all that is most desirable in literature, in books or authors, lies east of us. Are there any authors in McLean County? We who live in McLean county, in the heart of the middle West, "The Heart of the world's heart," gladly and proudly answer yes! Thanks to the many authors of this grand state and county. The East is awakening to a realization that we have authors who have found an abundance of material worth crystalizing into literature. Among the authors of this county are

two whom LeRoy will gladly claim: The late Mr. A. C. King, father of E. W. King, was one of the authors of the Western Grammar, published in 1845; our esteemed townsman, Nelson Goodrich Humphrey is the author of the interesting book of poems, entitled "Random Shots," published in 1884.

"Shakespeare and the Bible have been grouped as the greatest instrumentalities in making English literature what it is." There are here many very old copies of the Bible—that Book of all books—the Book that is solid gold,

and the Book containing the history of the Greatest life the tragic death of the Man of Galilee, the Prince of Peace. This Book possesses an interest and fascination unequaled in all other books. "Age cannot wither, nor custom stale" its grand majestic, or infinite variety. The most cherished, the most popular of all books ever published in the past or present, shines out anew with each passing century; the criterion, not only of home, of the soul, of the sentiments, but the Book first on mother's knee, first under the student's lamp, and the last at our bedside.

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**LeROY : : ILLINOIS**

# Ye Old-Time Spelling School

By Mrs. L. A. Rike

WHO is there of us who does not read with pleasure of those far off days that we spent in the little red school house by the roadside? What a peculiar fascination lingers around the dingy room with its warped floors, its battered seats covered with initials carved by some boys with a Jack-knife.

"The charcoal frescoes on its wall:

Its door sill betraying

The fleet that, creeping slow to school

Went storming out to playing.

We have but to close our eyes and our mind is filled with reminiscences of various descriptions, from the debating and spelling school down to some passing fancy we had for some lass or lassie, in checked apron or striped shirt. We may not ourselves own to such a fancy, but in all probability we have not forgotten the shy glances, the tender tone, or the stolen kisses of our more fortunate schoolmates.

We seem never to get too old to sit and dream of those dear old days, that stand out in our memory with greater prominence than any other event; and as we ponder over them, we recognize the same thrill of joy, the same incentive to achieve great things in the formation of words by letters, or the genuine good will and unity existing between the participants of an old fashioned spelling school. In the days dating back thirty years ago, spelling seemed to be one of the main issues in our school life, and no day's work was complete without the teacher ranging the boys and girls in a line on the floor to spell. If a word was miss spelled any one below spelling it correctly, passed above those missing it, and the one standing at the head of the class each night received a "head mark;" then passed to the foot; only, perhaps, to repeat the same proceedings the next day.

I remember distinctly the long evenings at home, around the center stand, with books piled up before us for the purpose of familiarizing ourselves with the next days' lessons. And among them all, no books were so carefully studied as the old elementary speller. Often our parents remonstrated with us for neglecting our other studies, but we invariably replied: "We are after the head mark to-morrow." It made very little difference if arithmetic lagged behind, or geometry came out a failure, or geography was drug, history might pass into a proverb and algebra stand for nothing but unknown quantities, just so we got the head mark. I imagine even yet; I can feel the old propelling desire within, for the supremacy in spelliag

and the proper derivation of words. Knowledge is power, and with some the desire to gain it amounts to an insatiable thirst, leaving no stone unturned to reach the top-most round in the drill of knowledge, while laggards are constantly filling up the school vacuum, forgetting that ignorance is the curse of the world. The art of framing words by letters is a power not achieved in a single day or week, but comes only through earnest application and incessant toil.

But more than any other event connected with those old days, is the spelling school. There were those who loved spelling for its own sake, and who, smelling the bat-

tle from afar, came to try their skill in the tournament, hoping to freshen their laurels they had won in their younger days: for the old and the young came from every direction, trigged out in their Sunday best — bright garbaldes of the latest make, and bright ribbons that rivaled still brighter cheeks. How shall I attempt to describe the old-time spelling school, with its charm and its back-sets? It stands out with vividness and variety, the one might set aside during the six months school for genuine pleasure and recreation; but the excitement begins when the choosing up time comes. The two persons, who ever they might be, appointed to choose up, come forward, take the broomstick and toss it from hand to hand to decide which should have first choice. One toss it to the other, who held it fast where he happened to catch it, then the first placed his hand above the second, and so the hands were alternately changed to the top,

the one who held the stick last without room for the other to take hold, had gained top and had the choice, and began a thorough scan of the sea of faces to be sure he would select the best speller. Soon all present, except a few of the old folk, found th selves ranged in opposing hosts; the poor spellers lagging in with what grace they could at the foot of the two divisions. The village squire or other important personage opened the book and began to give out the words to the two who had chosen up; and now the excitement run to fever heat; and one finds themselves wondering if good soellers are born and not made, for their facility reminds one of the mathematical prodigies that crop out every now and then to bewilder the world; while many think they know more about the spelling books than old Noah Webster himself. There is also another class called sweetheart, who care more about their sweet nothings than any part they may have in the word



Mrs. L. A. Rike

beling, and occasionally there can be heard from the lips of some pretty maiden:

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word,  
I hate to go above you,  
Because—the brown eyes lower fell—  
Because, you see, I love you."

At any rate, however, this may be, those who never took part in an old-time spelling match, have missed much of real genuine pleasure out of their lives, let alone a good drilling into the intricacies of learning how to place every letter in every word in the English language. Right

here is a good chance for a moral—that were there a few more spelling schools now a days mixed with the study of Greek, Latin and Shake-peare, there might be a more complete mastery of the intricacies of word framing.

But we pass on and on, pasesing, phrasing and spelling, with a dash of sunshine here, a shadow there, never getting out of touch with the dear old school days. How true it is—

"We live to learn in life's hard school,  
How few who pass above him  
Lament their triumph and his loss,  
Like her—because they love him."

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# Newspapers of Empire Township

By John H. Harper

ALLOW me to express to you my thanks and appreciation for the honor conferred in the selection to contribute something I may know, and some that may possibly be overdrawn, or hardly accurate, in reference to Newspapers and Newspaper men of LeRoy—past and present conditions. My memory may be at fault is why it is imitated that all may not be actually correct, but I trust so nearly true that it will pass with not unfriendly criticism. It is a worthy and enterprising action in thus making history for LeRoy on this important question. And in speaking on this topic I am pleased to quote a few words from the president of State Historical Society, Dr. J. F. Snyder, and Mr. L. D. Carver, State Librarian, of Maine:—"The local and editorial columns of a Newspaper portray to the discerning mind the characteristics, aspirations and achievements of the people in your neighborhood, respectively, and the community as well, in a light that would otherwise be lost to the world. The advertising pages of the country press more truly represent the people of their localities—their motives, incentives and peculiarities—than can be done by the pencil of the artist combined by the pen of the philosopher. The newspaper, day by day, week by week, mirrors all phases of human life, and prints with fidelity all transpiring events of interest within its sphere of activity. Its pages are the best possible source from which students of history, and of social and political problems can obtain their material. For that service the newspaper is invaluable, and well nigh indispensable. It records acts which may rise up to glorify a people long after their bones have crumbled to dust and their national existence ceases—acts that stand out on the printed pages to meet the eye of the critic, the historian and the student of history—hence an unassailable witness to our honor or our shame in all time to come. To the end that our life, with hopes and fears, with its faith and courage, with its successes and failures, may be fully understood and appreciated and justly described by those who come after us. Let us labor unceasingly to preserve the fullest and best records a people can transmit to their successors—a file of newspapers of our day and generation."

Every newspaper man and every editor and editress, who is not afraid of their shadows, we ought to regard as among the most responsible and prominent in our midst.

Away back in the year 1856 we learn that a man by the name of James Levens started a small paper in the city, using what is known as a Guernsey job press, and said paper was called "The LeRoy Observer." We know nothing about his history or the character of his paper, and we understand he remained here only a few months. So far as we are informed the then sprightly little village of LeRoy was unknown to the newspaper world for many years.

In 1871-2 the writer of these lines started and published

from new material, the best that money could buy, "The Sucker State," which he made lively during its existence. He desired company and wrote to one J. W. Wolfe, who came here and commenced the publication of a paper which he called, "The LeRoy Exchange." Each one of us did well, financially, but might have done better if we had been more gentle and amiable, but we would not be peaceable and after taking an invoice of our belongings and considered how we had afflicted an intelligent and cultured people with unnecessary floods of personalities, while catering to the tastes of the vicious, we both pulled out for untried pastures. We did not do as well as we knew, and of course the wrongs were boomerangs. Messrs. Jeff Barnett, Cheny, Parks, Keenan, Moore, King

and many others, were men who stood by us in all our wars for justice, and we got it when one of the above named gentlemen informed us both that our time was out. Mr. W. was located near where Mr. Ayton's place of business now is, and Col. J. S. H., was located over Barnett's store, with the entire west end of the house lettered in bold letters, "The Sucker State," with a large silk flag near the entrance, and a banner across the street reading, "Republican Headquarters." We were bitter and hostile in editorials and write-ups through our papers, though friendly enough outside, so much so that observers concluded that we were partners, and the fuss was a premeditated and planned play. Not so; and we went down together, with ice-

cream suits and railroad passes only to carry us away. In a few days Mr. W. found himself in Nashville, Tennessee, with cases on a morning paper, and H., in Des Moines, Ia., negotiating for a printing office without a cent to make the first payment, but we had one of the ablest men in the city to stand good for our promise to pay, and that has been our stronghold all through life. Wolf had some splendid qualities, and he was as sharp as tacks. We liked him for his good traits of character and no man was ever blessed with a kinder or milder wife. She was a ministering angel to a man of genius, although enveloped with a man of immoral habits in those days.

Samuel Roland then started a little sheet and had it printed in Bloomington, but it soon breathed itself out of existence.

Then Charles Davis tried his hand, calling his paper "The LeRoy Enterprise." This was about the year 1877. We do not know anything about his proceedings, but we learned sometime since that he moved out West. He was said to be a fair editor.

Perhaps it was in 1878 that A. G. Smith came here and started "The LeRoy Free Press," and he edited it with ability up to 1887, when he sold out to your humble servant, who had run in a new office and had started "The LeRoy Eagle," over VanDeventer's drug store. In this office we contracted with T. L. Buck to publish for him a new temperance paper, called "The Prohibition Statesman."



John H. Harper

Mr. Burk ran one of the ablest papers ever published in LeRoy. It increased its circulation and was accomplishing a wonderful sight of good. It was firm, positively influential because of its truthfulness and its editorials of good sense and pointed moral worth to the community, but there came a sudden halt, and we were compelled to turn our attention elsewhere, while The Free Press was running itself. We sold to Rutledge and Crumbaugh and they run the "LeRoy Democrat," and The Statesman went to the city of Bloomington and came out as "The Lancet." In 1875, we started "The LeRoy Journal," and printed it in Farmer City, a young gentleman by the name of Brown, a clerk in a grocery store; being its local editor.

The Free Press was published regularly until we sold out to W. C. Devore, who changed the name to "The LeRoy Journal," and it continued until the outfit was destroyed by fire. Then the Free Press came fourth again in a new outfit, run by the writer, but before we did so we sent three printing offices from LeRoy, one to Farmer City, one to Coftax, and one to Chatsworth. So you see, Ladies and Gentlemen, we were "muchly" in the business. Next came George P. Rowley, Keys, Murray, Clevenger, Hendryx, Nutt, McKenzie & Young, Paul and Gale Smith, Harper again, then Tate, then Clevenger again, who is still in the business. But before this last scrap of history J. M. Zillhoefer had purchased the Journal, which had raised, Phoenix-like, from the debris, and continued to speak with freedom to an audience of freemen. This occurred in 1893, and it is still advancing with a speed unparalleled among country newspapers.

A country local newspaper should have all the news, as much so as any daily, and never suppress any of it for love of money. It should not wink at iniquity at any time or under any circumstances, always steering clear of sickening flattery and always calling everythings by its right name, if called at all. Sympathize with the poor and unfortunate, but warn them of their responsibilities in life, and that good habits and pure thoughts will lift them

out of their condition. The same advice will apply to the rich and self aristocracy, but don't shield them on account of the golden calf, and fawn around them for approval. Keep it prominent before the people that selfishness, untruth, false trimmings, and evasions lower the standard and dignity of a newspaper.

Recently a paramount question was before the people. More essential to health and morals than all other topics on earth, and the papers were silent when they ought to have been plain, frank and outspoken. The defeat of the main issue was a shame and a calamity. The successful subject was a matter of dollars and cents, while the other one was of blood and tears, and if the "Statesmen" had been in the fight, or on the ground, even, the plain unvarnished truth would have been spread all through the city, which every good man and woman would have endorsed and perhaps would have had its influence for truth among the unfortunate. A newspaper in this land should be bold in declaring the real truth on every occasion, because in a great measure it is the educator.

We are not anxious for notoriety and we hope whoever corrects and edits this manuscript will see fit to drop us out of sight. We feel that we are the smallest of all of them. In the 163 papers we have started, purchased and sold in the different states, and many of them are running today, out of which large fortunes have piled up, we now find ourself 72 years of age, located in this city in a humble dusty looking cottage which many of our more fortunate brethren would not camp in. No one censured—its all right as it is. The lesson learned is a good one to us—the race is not always to the swift. We started too fast. We are glad that we are still among the living and that we are permitted to dwell in a plucky newspaper city with the girl from Sangamon, who stood up with us in 1860. The latch string of our wigwam still hangs out. When we leave here we expect to triumphantly enter the celestial gates of The Golden City.

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# Old-Time Music

By Nelson Goodrich Humphrey

YOUR humble servant has been requested to write a few lines as to the olden time music in LeRoy and vicinity. It makes all the difference how we handle the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet or how notes on the musical scale are placed. It appears an easy subject, but you remember the Indian said, "Its the easiest thing in the world to see a white man mow with a scythe." You can tune a violin too high or you can tune it to low; if to high, you break the strings; if too low, it makes dull music. So it is with the human mind, hence the necessity of being properly fortified and get in between the extremes and not be a crank, which applies to all lines of thought. In 1861, just as the blue birds came from the south, our people came from the east and located a little west of LeRoy. Older Settlers say that twenty years earlier was the time for more heartrendering melancholy music mingled with the tears from the pioneer girls and boys from other states who were compelled to leave their sweet-hearts by the decree of their parents to emigrate to better their condition—which the young people then could not fully understand. The wild birds were more numerous and filled the air with a grand mixture of melodies unknown today, viz, the geese; brant, crane, prairie chicken, etc.

Uncle Hiram Buck owned the first musical instrument, known as a tuning fork, and led the old-time airs with Mrs. Simeon Gibbs, Mrs. Dr. Welton, Nancy Watters, America Watters, Silas Watters, Richard Kimler, B. F. Parks, Sidney Baker, Esick Greenman and many others. Later, Calvin Hamson came to the front and led the music on many occasions that the older people can more fully appreciate.

In 1861, the writer listened to the echoes of the first LeRoy band.

Uncle Ben Parks made at that time about all the hiss known in Empire township. There were only two churches in LeRoy then, the M. E., and the C. P. churches. At the M. E. church Uncle Silas Watters led the music to a finish, carrying his tuning fork in his head. When the songs were pitched too high some of the singers would tip-toe it on the highest notes, heating the time with their bodies. Rev. A. S. Thomas did the same thing at the C. P. church, sometimes up among the stars, at others, duller music. Uncle Hiram Buck continued one of the wide-a-wakes, and when occasion required it, "fired up" and was not beholden to scientific men or musical stars, in order to have

plenty of good old-time music when all pitched in and did the best they knew with a spirit that was contagious.

I feel it my duty at this point to remember my kind and aged father, especially the day he borrowed Joseph Patterson's violin, telling him that he knew a good many old-time tunes stored away for future use. When he brought those tunes out on the strings the writer told Patterson they had been in his head more than seventy years and they ought to be aired once in every fifty years. He did it good order and seemed happier than the listeners.

The first organ that I remember was placed in the new

M. E. church, now known as the Masonic Temple. The M. E. people then felt that they were about the whole thing.

Out east, at the Mt. Olive church the voices of Hamands and Clearwatters could be heard into the small hours of the night.

In about 1860 the first brass band of LeRoy was organized with about ten members. J. V. Smith, Ben Parks, A. E. Lewis, A. B. Conkling, C. S. Moorehouse, E. E. Greenman and S. D. Baker are the only ones I now remember. A. B. Conkling was made leader and Phillip Kadel, of Bloomington, our teacher, and a fine one he was. He would come from Bloomington and stay three days for the modest sum of ten dollars—coming every other week. We progressed so far as to murder several pieces in a short time—America, the Star Spangled Banner, Dixie, etc., got badly hurt, but after a few months we took to the top of the Parks building and made the air tremble with

our efforts. Later, people said we did fine. I think it was in 1862, we were called to play for the burial of the soldiers of the civil war. Mr. Hartstock, I think, was the first one; we went to Cheney's Grove to play for his funeral. Later, we played for several others. We played at a number of picnic parties and got a good dinner for it, but we were not served with money at any time. It was always a free gratis job on every occasion. Our pay was an appreciative audience, filthy lucre never given to help pay for our training, but we got along very nicely, nevertheless, until September, 1864, when our family moved to Champaign. After that time the organization was continued and prospered for years, as I was told, and learned from my friends from time to time, and I am told it still lives.

Would greatly enjoy attending the meeting to which



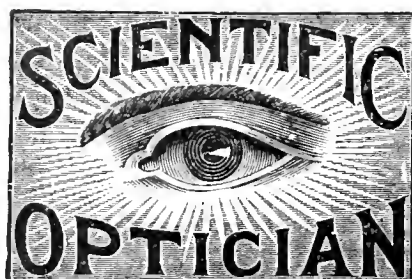
N. G. Humphrey

you invite me, and would especially enjoy hearing the band play which I helped to organize forty four years ago, and meet those friends whom I used to know and mingle with in my younger days and whose names and faces love to remember and which have always been very dear to me, because of those early associations.

Years rolled along; other churches were erected, and orchestras were seen leaning back, fiddling with all their

might. New solos, duets, and quartets were sung to music composed in foreign lands, perhaps, when listening to the murmuring water-falls. But my honest opinion is that the songs by which our old time fathers and mothers sang their children into dreamland or their songs of divine worship were just as acceptable to Almighty God and to mankind, as much of the music from the musical experts of 1904.

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# War Times in Empire Township

By J. R. Covey

IN accordance with your request for me to write a short article on the war history of Empire Township and immediate vicinity, in compliance with said request and by way of introduction, I will say that after consulting with old residents and on examination of all the history at my command I find that there has been persons residing in the township and immediate vicinity who have served as soldiers in all the wars from the Revolution down to and in the Spanish American war. I find that Captain John Karr and John Soliday who once lived in the locality served in the war of the Revolution. The former is buried in Heyworth Cemetery, Randolph Grove, and the latter occupies an unknown grave in the old part of Oak Grove cemetery, east of this city.

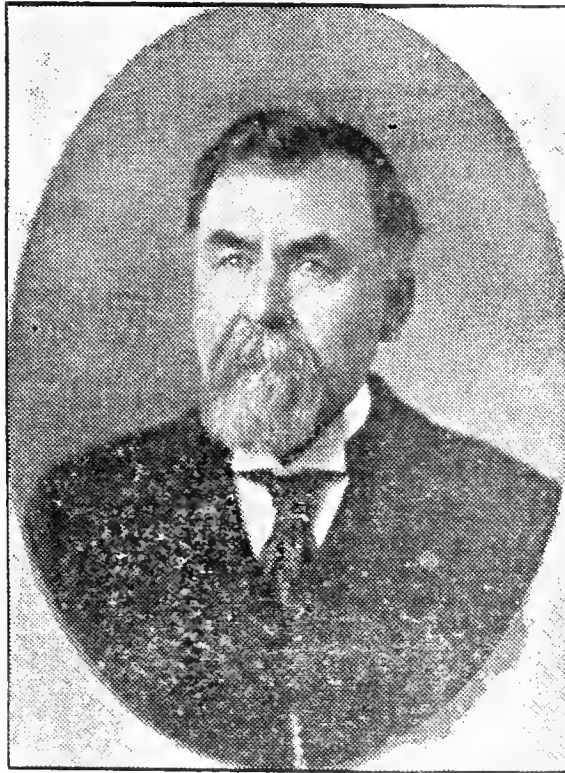
In the war of 1812 I find that Daniel Crumbaugh served as a soldier. He was born December 7, 1791, in Frederick county, Maryland; came to what is now Empire township in 1830 and died May 19, 1874; is buried in Oak Grove cemetery.

In the Black Hawk war (1832) I find that five persons served as soldiers who formerly lived in Empire township or immediate vicinity. Their names are as follows: James Johnson, who enlisted in Captain Covell's company of mounted rangers June 3, 1832, and was mustered out August 3, 1832. He was not in the skeladdle of Stillman's run, as has been stated by some of the Old Settlers. Mr. Johnson was born in the year 1808 and died in 1866; is buried in Gilmore cemetery, east of the city. Nathan S. Britton, Peter Buckles, Samuel Owen and Isaac Murphy also served as soldiers in the war, the former are buried in Oak Grove cemetery and the latter emigrated to Oregon and died there.

In the war with Mexico (1846) I find that the following persons who once lived in Empire township or vicinity, served as soldiers in said war, v z: Charles H. Rutledge, William A. Toppase, George Runion, Daniel Roland, Robert S. Howard, John G. Cranmer, James York, J. J. Crumbaugh, Henry Crumbaugh and H. M. Phillips. The latter, Mr. H. M. Phillips, served in the war with Mexico in Co. G., 1st Regt. Ill. Volunteers for the period of one year, that being the term of his enlistment. He also served in the war of the Rebellion as Captain of Co. I, 7th Regt. Ill. Volunteers, his commission being dated September 6, 1861, and date of muster into the United States service October 11, 1861. He was probably the first officer mustered into the service from Empire township in the war for the

Union, 1861 to 1865. He lies buried in Oak Grove cemetery, east of the city.

In the war for the Union, from 1861 to 1865, LeRoy and surrounding country did its full share. A volume of many pages could be written on the enlistment, service, battles engaged in, suffering of soldiers in rebel prisons, the weary marches, the monotonous camp life and their presence at the surrender of R. E. Lee at Appomattox and Joe Johnson in North Carolina, but this article is not intended to enter into an extended history of that kind but rather to relate a few things that is not generally known concerning the war history of the Township and vicinity.



J. R. Covey

I find that the first soldiers to enlist from Empire Township in this war were William Geer, Arthur E. Hutton and Thomas S. Lovera. They enlisted from LeRoy May 25th, 1861, in Company E, 14th Volunteer Infantry. The former died October 5th, 1862, of wounds received in battle. The first officer mustered into the service from the Township was Captain H. M. Phillips of Company I, 39th Illinois Volunteer Infantry. He was mustered into the service October 11th, 1861; wounded in the hand and taken prisoner May 16th, 1864, at the battle of Drury's Bluff, Va. Mustered out December 5th, 1864, at expiration of his term of service. He lies buried east of the city in Oak Grove Cemetery. Captain John M. Longstreet was the first cavalry officer mustered into the service from the Township. He was mustered into the service as captain of Company L, Illinois Cavalry, October 15th, 1861. Captain John F. Alsop was wounded more times in battle than

any other soldier that went from this city, he having received four gunshot wounds and was once knocked down by a piece of shell. He enlisted from LeRoy August 12th, 1861; promoted to sergeant May 26th, 1862; to first sergeant January 1st, 1863; to captain April 11th, 1865. Discharged for disability from wounds September 23, 1865, is at present living in this city. William C. Rike was perhaps the last soldier to be mustered out of the United States service who enlisted from this township in the war for the Union, he having enlisted in Co. G., 94th Ill. Volunteer Infantry, February 15, 1864, was transferred to 37th Ill. Infantry and was finally mustered out of the service May 16, 1866. He is living at the present time at Decatur, Illinois.

There are three instances on record where father and son served as soldiers in the war and enlisted from Empire

township. The first being L. H. Parks and his son Benjamin F., who enlisted in Co. L, 39th Ill. Volunteers Infantry September 4, 1861. The father served three years and was mustered out of service at the expiration of his term, September 10, 1864; died in 1887 and is buried in Oak Grove cemetery. The son, Benjamin F., was injured in the hand August 16, 1864, and was finally discharged at the expiration of his term of service, October 18, 1864, emigrated to Kansas and died there. The second was Jesse R. Cox, who enlisted from LeRoy in Company L, 4th Ill. Cavalry, and was transferred to Company B, 4th Cavalry on consolidation, was discharged and for several years was a resident of this city. He is buried in the Gilmore cemetery. His son, J. D. Cox, enlisted from this township in Co. B, 150th Regt. Ill. Volunteers, January 25, 1865, and was discharged at close of the war, January 16, 1866. He is now living in this city. The third was James Vanschoyck, who enlisted from this city in Co. G, 94th Ill. Regt., August 8, 1862, and was discharged July 17, 1865. His son, John, enlisted from this city April 7, 1862, in Co. I, 39th Ill. Regt. Was taken prisoner May 16, 1863, at Drury's Bluff, Virginia, and was finally discharged from service May 7, 1865. He is still living at this date.

Thomas Riddle, who enlisted from LeRoy in Co. K, 8th Ill. Infantry, August 1st, 1861, and was killed at Fort Donelson February 16, 1862, was the first victim of the war who enlisted from this township, and the G. A. R. honors his name by being called Thomas Riddle Post. Isaac and Peggy Johnson, who lived in this city when the war began; certainly deserve honorable mention in the war history of this township, they having sent five sons to do battle for the Union, one of which was taken prisoner and died in Andersonville prison.

Company G, 94th Illinois Volunteers was the only company whose entire membership enlisted from this Township and is justly entitled to be called the LeRoy company. Its officers when first mustered into the United States service were: Captain, Aaron Buckles; first lieutenant, Peter Vanatta; second lieutenant, M. E. Ferguson. This company was mustered into the United States service August 20th, 1862, and was mustered out July 17th, 1865.

There were two secret orders organized in this vicinity during the Civil war, an account of which properly belongs to the war history of this locality. One of the organizations was called the Knights of the Golden Circle, a treasonable organization brought into existence by certain persons who proposed to give aid and comfort to the Rebel cause by resisting the draft, should there be any, and by threatening the lives of Union citizens in general. The other organization was called the Union League, an organization that became necessary provided the Golden Circle committed an overt act or put into execution its threats against Union citizens. The Golden Circle went out of business about the year 1864 when the Veteran Volunteers returned to Empire Township to enjoy the fruits of a thirty days' furlough among their friends, and the Union League having served the purpose for which it was organized, also became a thing of the past.

The township was very well represented in the Spanish-American war, nine young men having enlisted in the U. S. service as soldiers, and two as assistant surgeons—Drs. J. F. Jones and Bert Wiley, and the enlisted men were—John D. White, A. McFarland, Chas. Fisher, R. L. Gibbs, Lo'd Winchell, Calvin Morris, A. L. Coffey, Ervin Wren and Fred Harland. John D. White perhaps saw as much of actual war as any of the boys who enlisted from this Township. He enlisted in Company I, 18th U. S. Infantry, March 21st, 1899; sent to Columbus, Ohio, and engaged in drilling and guard duty two months. From there he was sent to California in June, and sailed for Honolulu, arriving there July 3d, 1899, and on the 7th sailed for Manila, P. I., arriving there July 21st, 1899; thence to Ilo Ilo, Panna Island; was in several battles and skirmishes in which his command participated. He sailed for California on his return trip in September, 1901. From there he was sent to Salt Lake City, where he was mustered out of service March 21st, 1902. Came home and remained for a short period, then re-enlisted and is at present serving another enlistment in the army.

Thus ends my sketch of the war history of Empire Township and vicinity, and may the sympathy of all our people ever be with the boys who place their lives on the altar of their country.

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# Inventions

By Charles Williams



THE subject assigned to me by this honorable body is, to say the least, a very prosy one—one that admits of very little elaboration, and the preface can not be made very interesting, further than a statement of facts. The matter of "Inventions," as I take it, is not to be construed to apply only to those which have been administered upon at the Patent-right office, but to any thing in the form and nature of original ideas. Many valuable inventions and discoveries at different periods of the world's history have been given to the world for the benefit of mankind in general. Probably, before going further into the subject of inventions, it might be well for us to have an idea what invention is. The dictionary says that invention is the act of finding out or inventing. The contrivance of or construction of that which has not before existed, and from the U. S. Supreme decisions, I take the following quotations:—"The adoption of an old form to a new and useful purpose, constitutes invention. A new combination and arrangement of old elements to produce beneficial results never before attained, is evidence of invention. Many more quotations could easily be made, but the ones given will suffice.

An invention may be crude, and yet beneficial, so far as use is concerned. The savage, who discovered the process of making fire by rubbing two sticks together until enough heat was produced to give out a spark, was undoubtedly a true discoverer—a benefactor to his people. The man who made the first cause or coracle is just as much an inventor as were Robert Fulton, George Stephenson or George M. Pullman, when he invented his palace car. The matter of inventions of Empire township and vicinity I have found one of some difficulty in gathering data. Some being uncommunicative and not wishing to disclose their line of work, so that what few facts I herewith present are more from personal knowledge than anything else.

One of the first inventions coming within my knowledge was that known as Pugsley's Patent. I have been unable to classify the Pugsley machine. One thing I am sure of—it was not a "horseless" carriage—and yet it could have been worked by a mule. This machine or vehicle or carriage or whatever the inventor chooses to call it, received its motive power from a horse walking upon the deck of the carriage, turning a capstain arrangement that communicated with cog gearing to the rear wheels. This wheel was intended as a sort of stage coach to make daily trips from LeRoy to Bloomington and return, attaining a credited speed of twenty miles an hour. Great things were expected from this contrivance, but apparently Mr. P. overlooked the fact that "action is equal to reaction," and too much power was required to obtain the desired speed—merely another instance of man's proposal and God's disposal.

The Gilmore-Padgett Corn Husker was patented some

where in the middle 80's. I remember this invention very well, having examined it carefully at that time. This contrivance was undoubtedly an ingenious affair, but like many inventions, required too much machinery of a delicate nature, and consequently too susceptible to injury and breakage. I never heard what became of this structure, but suppose it to be adorning some attic, a monument to mistaken genius and misapplied capital.

The corn carrier, an attachment for corn shellers, invented and patented by George and John Healea, was for the purpose of carrying corn from the crib to the sheller, doing away with having to make so many changes or settings during one job. This machine, or some modification of it, is in general use.

Probably the best known and widely used of the inventions of our citizens is the Needle Threader, invented and manufactured by Coffey Bros., of LeRoy. The patent on this little device was secured about a year ago, and since then the owners have manufactured thousands of them. Very few people in LeRoy know just how much these men are doing in this line. Another of Mr. Coffey's patented inventions is the coat and hat rack—holding the coat and hat so that neither could fall. Nothing much was done with this and was finally disposed of to other parties. Mr. Coffey has worked upon several other useful devices which he has never patented, such as an ever ready hitching post, also a thread cutting device for an attachment to a Singer sewing machine. This little thing cuts the under thread when you cannot reach it with knife or scissors.

The cornplanter marker invented and manufactured by Charles Myers of LeRoy, fills a longfelt want in the lives of the farmers, giving them an implement that will make a plain mark regardless of clods. Mr. Myers has several other inventions, one being a machine for making wire fences.

One of the most curious little devices I ever saw was ball and socket soldering device for hard soldering eccentric articles which cannot be held in the hand while being soldered. This holder consisted of four arms on a base each one having a ball and socket attachment to the base, and were so constructed that figures cannot express the limitless number of positions into which the arms could be placed. The inventor of the above was F. W. Duke, formerly in the watch repair business in this city. This same gentleman invented and patented a thread-cutting thumble after he left LeRoy. Mr. Otto Zims has made application for patent on an automatic measuring milk can, one that will measure any quantity being poured from the can. The last invention coming under my notice is that of an automatic music turning music rack invented by C. E. Williams and patent pending under title of C. E. Williams and W. B. List. This rack is adjustable to music of any size and will turn six pages of music.

**Humphrey**  
... & List

**Real Estate and**  
**EXCHANGE BROKERS**

**LeRoy,**  
**Illinois**

## Results of Tiling

By Joseph Keenan

We wish to speak of some of the benefits derived from the use of open ditches, and more especially of the use of tile in McLean county and central Illinois. When I came from Ohio to Illinois in 1854, a large portion of these prairies were untillable and almost impassable, for the want of drainage. Wide impassable sloughs and ponds of water were numerous in every direction. They were the home of the wild ducks, geese, muskrats, frogs and germs for the propagation of fever and ague. We also had swarms of mosquitos and green headed horse flies to contend with and plenty of rattle snakes. This was all changed by the use of tile.

Instead of the croak and clatter of the frogs, and the gentle and persuasive hum of the mosquito and the whir of the rattle snake, we have the coo of the dove, the cheering notes of the lark and the sweet song of the mocking bird, also a vast stretch of rich and productive fields, where one may plow one-half a mile without stopping, instead of turning the mud at the edge of the pond or the slough after going a few rods as in olden times. The first tiling done here was not entirely satisfactory to the farmer. Much of it had to be taken up. From three to five inch tile was used, while nothing less than four to six inch tile should have been

put down. The demand for larger tile has been on the increase for several years. I think the first long string of fifteen inch tile (350 rods) laid in West township. I bought the tile of the Heafers, of Bloomington, and had them put down in 1894.

Since that time there have been many miles of that size tile, and even larger, put down. The farmers are beginning to realize the benefits derived from tiling the larger water ways and outlets.

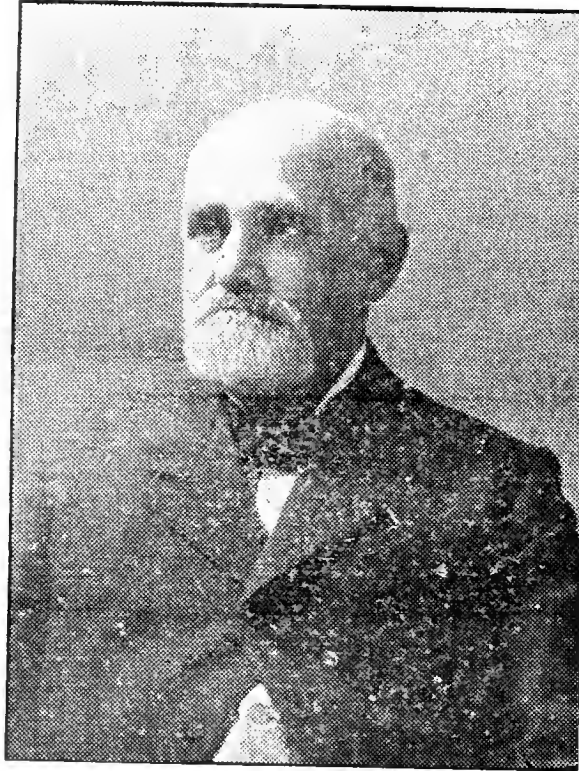
I think more and more large tile will be used during the coming years.

Previous to the use of tile unimproved prairie land was worth only from ten dollars to twenty-five dollars per acre. Had it not been for the general use of this tile, this same land would not be worth more than half what it is worth today.

Illinois was considered a very unhealthy state to live in and immigration would pass on further west, not finding sufficient inducement to locate here.

A most remarkable change came over the face of the prairie, when drained, and Illinois is now known as the

garden spot of the United States. It is the happy home of more independent farmers than any other part of God's Creation.



Joseph Keenan

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# Historical Reminiscence

By J. D. Baker

MY father, Dr. Isaac Baker, then living in Bloomington, having written to me while I was in Iowa, that there was no store in LeRoy and that he thought it would be good point to start a general store, I came back about December 1, 1843, and formed a partnership with E. E. Greenman, who had been peddling around over the country selling groceries, drygoods, and such things as were usually carried by peddlers in those days. The firm was known as Baker & Greenman. There were no store buildings to rent and no buildings fixed to sell drygoods in, but there were old buildings scattered over the town plot, some occupied by families and some deserted. There was an old building that had been occupied by a saloon, with shelving and counters on one side. It was a room 18 x 20 feet, situated on the north side of Main street on first lot from the corner opposite the present site of Van Deventer's drug store. We rented this building of James Wiley for one dollar per month. I remained in Bloomington that winter to go to Dr. Hobb's school, studying arithmetic—loss and gain—and common branches usually taught those days. I would attend through the week and hand out goods bought of my brother, Charles Baker, on Saturdays. Mr. Greenman ran the store while I was away. We boarded at a the hotel run by Esquire Hiram Buck, located on the ground now occupied by the First National bank. We paid one dollar per week each, for board, as there was no other store here. Mr. Buck was anxious to have us come. We boarded with him for about one year. Uncle Silas Watters then rented the hotel and we boarded with this gentleman for nearly a year.

From there went to board with Dr. Burnes, who occupied the building owned by us, bought of Ellwood Grist, who run it as a boarding house, and was located on the east end of the first block south of the present site of Jones' blacksmith shop. On the same block that the blacksmith shop is located, Elgar Conkling had set out a mulberry grove, preparing to start a silkworm industry—which never amounted to much.

We only occupied the saloon building about one year, then we bought a lot adjoining the west end of the Public Square, of Hilary Ball, and built a wooden building 18 or 20 feet wide by 32 or 40 feet long, afterwards building an addition on the rear of the building. We built on the east part of the lot leading room on the corner for a brick building. We occupied the wooden building about six years then we built the brick on the corner which we occupied for a number of years. On March 14, 1848, I married Laura A. Edwards and went to housekeeping in the dwelling that stood on the corner adjoining the building which we had first used for our store—this dwelling was owned by James Wiley who had moved to his farm southeast of LeRoy—this dwelling had two rooms: the front part was hewn logs and the back room of frame. John C. Biddle had occupied this dwelling before I rented it. In the fall of this same year I built my house on north side of Public

Square. In about the year of 1836 A. Gridley laid out the original town of LeRoy and later Conkling's addition was added.

In about 1860 I traded my interest in town property to Mr. Greenman for his interest in farm property, as we owned the most of our property in partnership. Mr. Greenman traded the brick building and goods shortly afterwards to Mr. Barnett and went back into the wooden building adjoining which we had formerly occupied, and run a grocery store. Shortly after we started our store, James Carpenter and Henry Stevens came to LeRoy and run a dry goods and notion store. They did not remain more than six months. Then Dr. Dodson came from the north part of Illinois and run a general merchandise store in the room formerly occupied by Carpenter and Stevens opposite our store.

The next store building was built and occupied by A. C. King (father of your esteemed citizen, E. W. King) on the lot opposite Morris' store. The Parks Brothers, Benj. and Harvey, came from Indiana, and built on the corner opposite Keenan's bank. J. Keenan bought an interest with Barnett and they conducted the business for a year or more.

The only church in LeRoy when I went there was the M. E. church, and was situated on the lots now occupied by A. H. Morris' residence. It was a building about forty feet square. They sold this structure to Elias Watt, who tore it down and moved it to his farm two or three miles out and made a barn of it, after the M. E. Church members had built the two story brick building, now occupied by Masonic order. The Masons organized their lodge in 1855 with seven charter members, as follows:—Dr. Cheney, Hiram Buck, E. E. Greenman, James Hazel, Pleasant Watt, S. D. Baker and Dr. Noble. I had been a member of the Masonic order in Bloomington, for about six years, before we organized the lodge in LeRoy. I am the only charter member of this order now living and am in my eighty-fifth year.

The first mill was built, I think, in 1839 by Elisha and Simeon Gibbs, and was run as a saw and grist mill. It was located on the slough in the south part of town, near the Harvey Parks residence.

I do not remember much about the old band or who the members were. I was in the band for awhile, but my memory is not clear about the other members, except three, J. V. Smith and E. E. Greenman, who played second alto, and myself, who played first alto.

Some of the old settlers that were in LeRoy when I first went there were as follows:—James Wiley, Esq. Hiram Buck, Ashby Neal, Amos Neal, Alisha Gibbs, Simeon Gibbs, Moses Kimler, Dr. Weldon, Mr. Hutton, Mr. Conkling and his sons, Edgar, Stephen, James, Charley, Aaron and Dr. Conkling, Ellwood Grist, Dr. D. Edwards, Wm. Clark, John C. Badooley, John W. Baddeley and old Mrs. Barnett, the mother of T. J. Barnett.

# Geology

By W. E. Leavitt

SHAKESPEARE gave us the "Sermons in Stones." It is a fact wonderful preachments are made to those who stop and read. They are not hard to understand either. The 540 feet revealed by McLean county coal shafts can furnish many sermons, showing how the powers that be did things in the long ago. The stonework goes on perhaps 100 feet below the bottom of those shafts before reaching foundation granite, and from these we can hardly guess how much more story would be told if the earth crust is one mile thick. Wonderful stories are waiting for the readers in this closed book under our feet. The stories are fascinating, too, even for the average reader if he would open the book and look thoughtfully around. The distinguished modern naturalist, Agassiz, was asked to go abroad with a friend—his expenses being paid—for a vacation. He said he could not spare the time. He said he wanted to explore his back yard. He found there in fragments of stones the record of many thousand years. He found enough material to fill a book and enjoyed it more than a trip abroad.

A very brief writing about what the layers are that are seen in the Bloomington coal mines the short distance they go would make a good volume. If the writer of this knew much about geology he would be able to write enough on this subject to make one historical society report.

It is believed by scientific men North America began as a group of islands rising out of the ocean. Many of them were volcanic, pouring matter into the space between, forming layers under the water, thus laying the foundation granite. The Hawaiian Islands show the method of work. Greenland, Eastern Canada, New England, the rocky backbone of the continent, and other parts show they were such instances. The islands grew, the spaces were filled, depressions and upheavals occurred making deep basins like Hudson bay, the great lakes, the Mississippi valley and the high lands. Water action ground the rocks and cut ways here and there and piled the layers upon each other, making the continent. Tropical heat and arctic cold were agents working in their strange way through immeasurable time, leaving the positive evidence that can be easily seen on the face of things.

Our surface mould you all know is the product of vegetable growth and decay. It is deepest where the vegetation grew fastest and short lived, and remained undisturbed in its decay. The prairie mould, the marsh lands and the swamps were thus formed. Think how long the process went on to give the results we know. The high timber tracts show less mould, because the vegetation, the trees principally, grew less rapidly and furnished less matter for decay than other places, and besides the rain washes the little from the ridges and high land and hill-sides to the level ground. Peat bogs are masses of vege-

table matter undecayed because water arrested that process.

Clay, is a general term, meaning rock has been ground to finest powder. Its color and nature depends on the kind of rock ground and the minerals included. The red clay of bluegrass Kentucky is heavily charged with iron. The tough, clean clay, that makes such good brick in Illinois, is made from boulder dust that was ground in the ice age. Each manner of soil or stone might be explained by telling the process of formation and the ingredients. Slate, shale, chalk, are different forms of sediment colored and formed by different processes and different ingredients—really clay or rock dust. Black slate is colored by vegetable matter, etc. Boulders are rolled about, and little broken gravel are little boulders worn smooth; sand is cracked rock, and what becomes powder is the soil, or deposited under water becomes rock. The layers of sand, gravel, clay, soapstone, limestone, sandstone, coal, shale, varying in thickness from 1 foot to 76 feet; 1 foot of lime rock or fire clay or shale or sulphurous rock, and 61 feet blue clay and 76 feet blue clay, 39 feet soapstone, 35 feet blue clay, 62 feet soapstone, etc., in the thirty-six layers laid bare, tell an interesting story of the long time before our day, when these things under our feet were being built by the powers that be.

Nearly 300 feet below the surface coal is found, again 100 feet deeper, and again about 125 feet further, and perhaps more further down it might be found. The coal deposits are only three or four feet thick. Coal is clearly vegetable in its origin. The vegetation was most unlike what we find today. It grew in water ages

ago and decayed there. It was kept from atmospheric action and our coal is the product. The coal seams indicate in that day intensely hot tropical conditions prevailed here. The vegetation grew in shallow lakes or brackish sea waters and had huge dimensions—ferns 50 to 100 feet high and 3 to 4 feet thick—and were quickly grown and soon decayed. Mammoth ferns and huge club mosses and other gigantic plants grew and left some of their forms for us to see what manner of vegetable life left the slimy matter over large areas—the coal fields of today. Where there are coal beds we know there were lakes and seas with this strange vegetation. If the lake or sea water that furnished Bloomington coal extended this way we have coal beds under us. If the water deposited more matter here than there we may have more and better coal. That remains to be seen. The tropical climate that made the vegetation was followed by floods of water arctic cold—the ice flowing from the north ground the rocks to powder and the water spread the dust—clay—over the region from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic and as far south as West Virginia. The hills were cut down and the valleys were filled—"brought low and exalted." Leveling



W. E. Leavitt



went on and doubtless upheaving in places, also. The mills of the ice age ground slowly, but ground exceeding fine and a lot too, to make 76 feet of clay here at one time, and to make 62 another, and all the various rocks, soils, sand and gravel and bowlders. In this region there are rocks that undoubtedly came from Lake Superior, and men feel sure they can identify the cliffs they came from. When clay covered the vegetable deposits and kept from decay—coal was the outcome, in time. The tropical and arctic conditions must have followed each other several times. Notice we have coal about 300 feet below the surface, then 400, then near 540, and perhaps it might be found again and again. Eight different times clay was deposited showing how many times similar action went on as well as modified formations of similar material at other times.

Gas has been found near here. Gas and oil are supposed to be products of the same material that gave coal. The shrinking of the earth or crowding in places squeezed out the oil and it was retained by something near it. Gas is a production of oil—not coal—or that is the prevailing belief. Oil and gas often come from the same well. They are not always found—yes seldom found in immediate connection with coal. The deposit from which they issue is a shale, an immense stratum of which extends over a large section from Western Pennsylvania across Ohio and Indiana, northward to Michigan and southward as far as Cincinnati—perhaps it is beneath us here—time will tell.

Of course a great deal of this has to be imagined, so little digging has been done, a great part of it generalization resting on small, perhaps sure foundation. It takes imagination to shed light in these dark places. Often it is hard for imagination to be great enough to meet the

Bloomington coal shafts show the the surface of this vicinity is built somewhat after the following order:

Formation—	Feet	Formation—	Feet	Formation—	Feet
Surface soil, sand and gravel....	19	Coal vein.....	3	Fire clay.....	4
Blue clay.....	61	Fire clay.....	9	Sand rock.....	20
Sind and water.....	4	Gray sandstone .....	4	Soap stone .....	62
Blue clay.....	76	Soap stone.....	22	Black slate.....	2
Soapstone .....	39	Dark shale .....	8	Fire clay.....	1
Lime rock.....	1	Soapstone.....	9	Sulphurous rock.....	11
Blue clay.....	35	Fire clay.....	10	Gray slate .....	1
Yellow Clay .....	15	Gray slate .....	22	Shale.....	1
Soft shell rock.....	4	Black slate.....	5	Lime rock .....	2
Soft gray sand stone .....	11	Coal vein.....	4	Slate.....	2
Hard limestone .....	12	Fire clay.....	10	Soap stone .....	6
Soapstone .....	5	Slate.....	3	Coal, 3 vein.....	3

About 540 feet.



## Indians

By W. E. Leavitt



THE saying, "The blood of no McLean county settler was shed by Indians," or "The Indians the early settlers met were harmless hunters and beggars passing along the trail that led through this vicinity," would make one think the story is short, commonplace and tame. On the other hand, this is the field of thrilling history of wild times when there was tragedy enough to make up for the peaceful times of the first settlers. The names, "Old Town," and the "Old Indian Fort," lead us to a page of history equal to anything found in other places where thrilling incidents abound, and make the places rich in stories of adventure and peril and dreadful suffering and death.

needs of such study, so mighty has been the work, so great has been the time used carrying on this tremendous process of building layer on layer through ages.

Near Bloomington, the remains of a forest have been found under 60 feet of earth. At Joliet, a tree trunk was found 30 feet below the surface, also a cedar forest under 20 feet of clay marl. Think how much ice must have moved to grind so much rock to powder and how much water to spread 61, 76, 92 and 39 feet deposits, burying forests, 60, 30 and 20 feet below the surface. Our imagination is too weak to comprehend, our vocabulary too insignificant to declare, even faintly or briefly, the history of this vicinity. A gigantic plan has been followed; inconceivable forces worked building this vicinity, county, state and country. What would be more fascinating than the story of this black soil, our clays, the sands and sand stone, the gravel and limestone, the soapstone, slate, shale and coal, that underlie our feet. We are wading through and walking on mysterious combinations of great agencies in immeasurable time. Plain earth, mud, rock and sand have wonderful stories, marvelous history for those who stop to read—more charming than romance or fairy tale that man's mind can conceive. They bear the stamp of the Infinite Power.

These are a few hints hastily written by one who knows little about it, but wants to know more of the wonderful and most interesting, yet simple story that is to be read from the things under our feet. It interests me to know I can dig with my heel as deep as the works of hundreds of years, and push a shovel down through the work of ages. So much historical work is thus before our eyes, we should stop and read the marvelous story.

The Kickapoo Indians, found here by the first settlers, were those who sold their lands east of here and moved westward from their river and forest homes to the prairies. They were not like their people of the same name of the prairies, who lived in the "Old Town—who built the "Old Fort" in earlier days. The Prairie Kickapoos, who held the central part of Illinois, between the Illinois and the Washash rivers, were a different class from those who were able to live in contact with the white man, and never were reconciled to live near civilization. The French were never able to pacify them. They fought the French, English and Americans and their Indian allies. They ravaged the borders of Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and the



Illinois were practically exterminated by them even when helped by the French in their first occupancy of Southern Illinois. They were energetic, talented Indians, industrious, better armed than their fellows, good hunters and bitter fighters—first in the fray and last in the fight—and one of the cleanest of Indians. With the Foxes and the Sacs they were the terror of the whites and their Indian allies. They were adepts at building palisades for defense, and with their other qualities you can see that it would be a bloody chapter that told of their occupation of this vicinity. They went into voluntary exile when beaten beyond the Mississippi, when civilization and Indian foes allied attempted to exterminate them, and continued in their descendents the bitter warfare against the whites. In the years of victory and defeat great must have been the bloodshed and butchery in this fair section of our state, when the wars of hatred and extermination were being waged with the French and Pottawatomies and Ottawas and Chippeways and Americans. Later they had to give place when they became very much reduced in numbers—but with spirit unbroken.

"Old Town" was the capitol, the "Old Fort" was their place for defense. The old maps located the great Kickapoo capitol near the headwaters of the Sangamon, and there is no other place to claim it. Tradition of Indians point here. A Kentuckian, who visited here in 1840, declared he had been a captive there, somewhere about 1800. It was woven into a pleasing story by a school teacher of later time, and published in a Peoria paper, but the romance had its foundation in the romantic, tragic and horrible doings that went on here in those early days.

The capitol shows its remains over a space of a mile square. The acre area of the fort and its surroundings of graves, inside and outside, and the presence of arrowheads and tomahawks and bullets and gun barrels indicate the strife that went on. The large Indian burying ground shows the largeness of the occupancy.

A member of a company of rangers of the war of 1812 tells of the burning of the fort, and the oldest settlers remember the hollows in the bank of earth where the posts had been. The Kickapoos, at the time of the settlement, knew nothing of it. The Illinois did not do such things—only the fierce Prairie Kickapoos so built. We know many captives, white and Indian, were brought here from their expeditions that were carried on in all directions by these cruel, inveterate haters, and we can readily understand the frightful barbarity that was practiced as great as was ever recorded or known. A great unwritten chapter of human suffering, torture at the stake, running the gauntlet, burning alive—all the savage Indian knew so well how to inflict on his captive, white or Indian. Enough transpired then to more than make up for the peaceful attitude of those who came after them and were in contact with the earliest settlers.

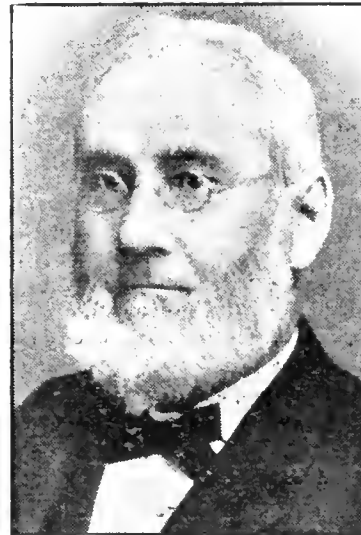
## First Band

By A. B. Conkling

IN about 1860, the brass band was organized with about ten members. J. V. Smith, Ben Parks, A. E. Lewis, A. B. Conkling, C. S. Morehouse and S. D. Baker, are the only ones I now remember. A. B. Conkling was made leader and Philip Kadal, of Bloomington, our first teacher—and a fine one he was. He would come from Bloomington and stay three days for the most sum of ten dollars, coming every other week. We progressed so far as to murder several pieces in a short time—America, Star Spangled Banner, Dixie, etc., got

hurt badly, but after a few months we took to the top of the Parks building and made the air tremble with our efforts. Later people said we did fine.

I think it was in 1862 we were called to play at the burial of soldiers of the Civil war. Mr. Hartsock, I think, was the first one. We went to Cheny's Grove to play for his funeral. Later we played at the burial of several others. We played at several picnic parties and we got a good dinner for it, but were not served with money at



A. B. Conkling

any time, it was a "free gratis" job on all occasions; our pay was an appreciative audience, and filthy lucre was never given to help pay for our training, but we got along very nicely, nevertheless, until September, 1864, when we removed to Champaign. After that time the organization was continued and prospered for years, as I was told, and learned from friends from time to time; and am told the organization still lives.

Would greatly enjoy attending the meeting to which you invite me, and especially hear the band play which I helped to organize forty-four years ago, and to meet those friends whom I used to know and mingle with in my younger days, and whose names and faces I love to remember and which have always been very dear to me because of life-time associations.

NOTE—The type-writer included the above letter in the article written by N. G. Humphrey.

ED GUARD

FRANK BISHOP

# GUARD & BISHOP

## HARDWARE AND IMPLEMENT DEALERS

LE ROY

ILLINOIS

## *The Cumberland Presbyterian Church*

*By Mrs. E. B. Young*

CUMBERLAND Presbyterians were the first to establish regular services here. This church was organized by Rev. John Merry about the year 1832. It was called Salt Creek Congregation. The first elder in Mackinaw Presbytery was William Walker, in the year 1837, which met at Shiloh, now called Hopedale. Neil Johnson was the Moderator and James McDowell, Clerk. By petition from Salt Creek church the Presbytery changed its name to LeRoy, from which time its history is known by the older members of this church. From the time of its organization to the present date this church has been represented in Mackinaw Presbytery by thirty-nine elders. The Rev. R. D. Taylor, Rev. S. Archer, Neal, Johnson and James Davis were the earliest ministers of this denomination working in this place. The numerous Buckles families, with many others, were the first to interest themselves in securing a house of worship and regular services. Rev. R. D. Taylor, father of our esteemed townsman, Dr. E. K. M. Taylor, and familiarly known and beloved as "Uncle Bobby," was ordained by the Mackinaw Presbytery in 1838 and served faithfully as pastor for many years. Thomas Buckles and James Rutledge were the first elders. J. D. Baker and Peter Buckles were the leaders in building this church. Wm. Elisha Gibbs and son, Simeon Gibbs, building the frame work and placing the seats, Wm. Smith enclosing it. No one seems to father the architecture of this old church, which was one of the oddities of the age. It was forty feet square, the entrance almost opening in the alleyway. The windows had fifty lights of glass which were square, the pulpit away up to the ceiling. Rev. F. J. Johnson was then installed as pastor, which position he maintained for twelve years. During his pastorate a neat brick church was built, in 1863. Downing and Hardy were the architects and builders. Church membership increased and Sabbath School maintained, Rev. Marlow, Best and Kimberlin preaching successively for a period of years. Connected with this church as part of their work and under their auspices was the LeRoy Seminary, an institution for higher education than the common schools afforded, Rev. Patton from Tennessee having first charge, from 1854 to 1859, with several assistants. This seminary was a success until the building up of the graded schools. Presbyterianism stands today the established religion of Scotland. It has its ups and downs here the same as there. When Charles the First persisted in forcing the prayer book upon them until he led to a revolution, the Scots stopped their ears rather than listen to the service. This church is now composed of as strong, sturdy members as Scotland could boast, and they enjoy the privilege of worshipping according to the dictates of their own consciences, in a grand and comparatively new church, erected in 1898, a magnificent edifice which its builders and supporters may well cherish with a feeling of pardonable pride and pleasure. This splendid church was erected during the successful pastorship of Rev. J. E. Aubrey. As a minister he represented in his personality a remarkable enthusiasm, which resulted in great good to the town and community and especially a benefit to the C. P. Church. The church organization at present consists of about 200 active members and is in a prosperous and thriving condition. The present pastor is Rev. Walter E. Spooner, whose earnest work and Christian character, is forming a lasting impression upon the community.

## *The First Settlers of LeRoy*

*By Thomas L. Buck*

AA

The first settlers of LeRoy and its business men traced through a number of years, from 1835 to 1850:

Edgar Conkling and family; Amos Neal and family; Hiram Buck and family; Leonard P. Morrow and family; Dr. Moran and family; Jas. Wiley and family; Moses Kimler and family; James Newell and family; Davison Gilmore and family; Catherine Barnette and family; Marshall Whittaker and family; Jno. W. Baddeley and family; Harmon Buck and family; Wm. Works and family; Hiram Patterson and family; Thos. Sperry and family; Jno. Vannote and family; Stephen Conkling and family; Dr. Weldon and family. Amos Neal had the first little stock of dry goods in LeRoy in 1835, he sold to Edgar Conkling who continued the business for a number of years. Jno. W. Baddeley located a town one half mile south of the southwest corner of LeRoy and called it Monroe and started a store, but when he seen LeRoy was to be the town he pulled his building to LeRoy and located on the old corner west of the new Town Hall, and Baddeley & Son were merchants in LeRoy for many years. Alexander Connell was the first tailor. Leonard P. Morrow was the first saddler and harness maker, butcher, hunter and story teller. Catherine Barnette was a tailoress. She was a grand and noble woman, ever ready to help in sickness or health. But few are living today to cherish her memory. Wm. Works was a speculator in a small way. Hiram Patterson was a wheelwright and farmer. Thos. Sperry kept a doggery and sold whiskey by the drink, quart or gallon. Jno. Vannote was a charcoal burner. Stephen Conkling was a farmer. Dr. Weldon a physician and surgeon. Thos. Spenser was a well digger. Moses Kimler was the first blacksmith; Harmon Buck and Davison Gilcome came soon after in the same trade. Daniel Proctor was a carpenter. Hiram Buck was the first tavern keeper, postmaster, Justice of the Peace. Dr. Moran was the first physician. He left soon. Dr. Weldon came next and was here several years. Jas. Wiley kept a little store and was a farmer besides. Jas. Newell was a Baptist preacher. Moses Kimler was a blacksmith and farmer. Davison Gilmore was a blacksmith and farmer. Harmon Buck was a blacksmith and doctor under the old Tomsonian system and was very successful. He was the father of Mrs. Jno. Kline, who still lives here. Cheney Thomas was school teacher, Justice of the Peace and at one time elected Tax Collector and Sheriff of McLean county and held both offices at the same time. Marshall Whittaker was a farmer.

### **From 1840 to 1850**

Dr. Burns, father of our townsman, Jno. Burns and Mrs. Dr. Taylor, was a prominent physician here in the early forties. T. J. Barnette, son of Catherine Barnette, was a farmer and stock dealer at an early date. Edwood and Isaac Grist were carpenters. Elisha Gibbs and sons, Simeon and David, were millwrights by trade. They built the first steam saw and grist mill and wool carding machine attached in 1840. Jerry Greenman was the first cabinet maker; Calvin Hampson came later and engaged in the same business. Dr. Edwards came in 1840, was also a methodist preacher; Dr. Albert Luce came later; Drs. Cheney and Noble located in LeRoy late in the forties and were prominent physicians for years. Julius White sold goods in 1840; Carpenter and Risinger sold goods a little later; Baker and Greenman began selling goods in 1843; Bigsby Dodson in 1845; Jno. Burton, grandfather of Jno.

Burns sold goods in 1849; then came T. J. Barnette and Jas. Kimler. Six of the above men were selling goods in LeRoy in 1850. At an early date two long haired men located here. Their business seemed to be horse stealing and counterfeiting, but they seen they were watched closely so left between two days. In the early days horse racing was quite a business. A beautiful one-half mile track encircled this little village. The races were running races, usually one mile and repeat. A path was made for each horse by dragging a log to smooth the surface. Men, women and children could stand in their own doors and see the racing. Black Hawk, Jim Crow, McKinnie Roan, Copper bottom, Tiger-whip, Lady Jane, Clear the Kitchen, Roan-leg, were names of some of the running horses. Mrs. Fannie Wertz of Bloomington, Mrs. S. F. Barnum and Mary Patterson of LeRoy are daughters of Hiram Patterson. Mr. Patterson deserves special mention as one of the early business men of LeRoy. He planned and built the first horse mill that ground corn for all the community. He invented a horse power turning lathe that he used in his business; he invented a mill to squeeze the juice out of corn stalks to make molasses; could stock a plow; make the wood work for a wagon; make an ox handle or a wood sled; make spinning wheels and reels; turn fancy posts for bedsteads. He was a man for the times. Frank Kimler, Sr., son of Moses Kimler, and my sister, Amanda Crumbaugh, daughter of Hiram Buck and myself were here in 1836 and are still living in LeRoy. The above sketch was written by request and entirely from memory, but in the main is correct.



### *The Relic Exhibit*

*By Mrs. J. V. Smith*

The early settlers who are interested in these matters had a large number of old relics and newspapers on exhibition at this meeting. Among them was an old B-flat brass horn used by the first band in LeRoy by J. V. Smith. A violin 200 years old and a snuff box 125 years old, the property of Mrs. Kate Dudderar. Three old quilts which were over 50 years old. A woven quilt made by Oral Buck's grandmother, Mrs. Katherine McConnell. A coil of rope 63 years old, made by Mahlon Bishop, Sr. Two old fash-

ioned fireplace dog-irons, the property of John McConnell also an old brass candle holder. A sickle sixty years old belonging to Mahlon Bishop; also an Indian hatchet found by his father in 1837. In Section 15, Empire township. An old two-pronged pitchfork. A garter snake captured in 1846 and well preserved in good old rye whiskey by E. E. Greenman; also a letter dated May 2, 1848, to Mrs. Ruth Baker of Bloomington, Ill., the property of Mrs. Belle Crumbaugh. Mr. E. W. King furnished many interesting and valuable relics and mementos of his father's business life in LeRoy. An old slate on which he had kept his daily sales for over 50 years; a daily register book of 1830; copies of letters of very early dates in shorthand, done by his brother, C. C. King, who was at one time a shorthand reporter for Henry Clay, in Washington; a letter from a brother of J. F. King of Terre Haute, Ind., to A. C. King of Sheffield, Conn., dated July 25, 1830, having only a circle stamp and marked (paid 25 cts) postage; an old newspaper, the Hampshire Gazette of August 26, 1845, being six columns to the page and four pages; another, the New York Weekly Tribune of Nov. 30, 1844, which has eight pages of solid reading matter with a few small card advertisements; a land deed of sheepskin, dated Nov. 11, 1839, and signed by Martin VanBuren. Books of many kinds; of dates from 1820 to 1845, belonging to A. C. King, and a grammar compiled by Mr. A. C. King, of date of 1845. Some two dozen old legal documents, some signed by Thomas Carlin, governor and A. P. Fiske, Sec. of State. An old fashioned plow over 70 years old, belonging to G. W. Simpson. An old German bible, which is believed to have been brought to America in the Mayflower by the ancestors of L. A. Rike. An ivory headed cane once carried by Mr. Daniel Crumbaugh, who was a soldier in the war of 1812, and who came to Buckles' Grove March 8, 1830. This cane is now the property of Mrs. F. M. Crumbaugh. An old double handled cross cut saw, belonging to Thos. Buck. An old book—The Author's Religion—thought to have been written about 1818, by Eleazar Howard, the great grandfather of Earl Riddle, but the book is the cherished property of E. W. King. An old gun bearing this mark "H. Mock, No. 1007" made in England, and brought to America in 1851 by H. Grizeelle. Also an old slaw knife made in Pitchcome, England, and brought to this country by Mrs. Martin Grizzelle. A woolen bed spread woven in 1853 by Mrs. Corray, the mother of Mrs. Thornton Clark, who then lived near Pekin, Illinois.



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